
DERRY
OF TOTEM CREEK

HUBERT EVANS



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EVERY SINEW IN HIS STURDY BODY WAS TAUT

DERRY OF TOTEM CREEK

HUBERT EVANS

Frontispiece by
H. E. M. SELLEN

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WITH his forepaws on the window sill and his black button of a nose pressed hard against the smirched glass, Derry, Ed Sibley's Airedale, looked down into the drab Vancouver street. Though the porch roof just outside his window blocked his view of the nearer half of the street, the traffic on the other side of the car tracks and the passers-by on the far sidewalk seemed to interest him, even after two weeks' confinement in this waterfront rooming house to which his youthful master had brought him.

Even after those two weeks the Airedale from the up-country frontier found a certain novelty in the scene. Ears slightly lifted, his brown eyes alert, he heard the clang of street cars and the rumble of traffic; trucks coming and going toward the wharves at the street end rolled past, their tops glistening in the drizzling rain. Once his tail wagged excitedly and Ed, slumped in the sagging sea-grass chair, looked out to see a dog trotting across the street with businesslike intentness.

"What a hope, ol'-timer," Ed grinned ruefully. "You haven't a pal in this man's town any more'n I have."

At the touch of his master's hand on his neck,

Derry's paws left the window sill and, after an understanding upward glance, he sat down beside the chair and laid his tan muzzle across his master's knee. Ed's fingers stroked him gently behind the ears and with eyes half closed the terrier responded with deep-throated murmurings of content. Then standing abruptly he trotted to the door and waited there. His backward glance was an invitation, eloquent as words, and in his fine eyes was that look of querulous discontent which had possessed him for the last week. He made it plain he wanted Ed to go with him, somewhere, anywhere, to do anything but remain inactive in the untidy room.

"Nothing stirring, mister," Ed told him. "You may not believe it, but right now your old man's doing some heavy thinking—and he'll have to do a whale of a lot more before we get out of this jackpot. Up north, when I talked of pulling out of Twin Forks, they all said I'd find myself up against it here. But no, I knew it all. Me thinking I could land a job here as a garage mechanic on account of having tinkered with a few old Fords! I only wish Sandy or some of them had up and thrown me in the river to cure me of my fancy notions."

Though the words themselves meant nothing to him, Derry caught the seriousness of the tone underlying his master's attempted humor. His ears came up, a pucker showed on his tan forehead and

he turned his head first to one side then to the other as if trying his very best to understand what it was all about. In spite of himself, Ed grinned.

“You’re the best *tillicum* a man could have,” he said somewhat huskily. “I got you into this mess but you’d be the last one in the world to say ‘I told you so.’ Believe you me I’ve learned my lesson. We’d head back north tonight if I’d the money to get there. As it is I’ve gone broke hanging on here looking for work. Even if we did get back to the Forks we got no money to grubstake. If something doesn’t break today or tomorrow, we’ll be up against it—hard.”

Derry sat down, his back to the door, and regarded his young master steadfastly. For over three years now, he had been Ed Sibley’s constant companion. He and Ed and Mac, the big sled dog, whom Ed had been forced to leave up north with a friend, had roved the Twin Forks country in happy comradeship. During those years a deep and lasting understanding had grown between them. Two humans, dwelling much in the solitudes, come to rely less and less on the spoken word, and to a dog, denied the medium of human speech, there comes an unfailing understanding which goes deeper than mere words. The slightest gesture, the least change in his master’s tone and facial expression is read correctly. A human may be deceived by words, but such a dog can not be, and so now Derry read the concern behind what Ed Sibley

had told him. He came again and sat beside the decrepit chair while Ed, chin in hand, reviewed the happenings of the past month.

In fairness to himself Ed knew his mistake had been a natural one and had been made with the best intentions. Born and bred in the Twin Forks country, on the fringe of northern settlement, he had fallen naturally into the wandering life of the frontier. Freighting, trail building with government gangs in summer, and trapping in winter, had been the most convenient, in fact the only, way of earning a living. And when he had gone to work in Sandy Hoskins' little garage and repair shop it had been with the purpose of learning a trade which would put him beyond the need of seeking casual labor.

But the Comet Garage had been sold; the Twin Forks country was changing and Hoskins and many of the old crowd had moved away. It was then that Ed had come down to Vancouver, resolved to seek steady work, only to find that his knowledge of motor mechanics was so imperfect that he was still in the unskilled labor class. Even so, he might have been able to apprentice himself at low wages, had not unemployment in other industries flooded the labor market and made it virtually impossible for him to find a place.

"Should have stayed at work I *can* do and in a country where I belong. I don't belong here," he

mused. "I wasn't cut out for towns. You weren't either," he added aloud to Derry. "You and me—we're a couple of square pegs in this part of the world. Well, what we going to do about it? No use sitting here feeling sorry for ourselves."

The emphatic change in his master's voice brought Derry to his feet and, as if in answer to the question, he trotted to the door and gave it a peremptory scratch with his blunt claws.

"You win," Ed told him. He left the chair, pulled his packboard and battered suitcase from under the bed and took out his beloved rifle. "Might as well eat as long as we can," he went on, decisively. "We'll go round to the hock shop with this. It's got us many a good meal up north. Guess it'll get us our last one now—but in a different way."

At sight of the rifle Derry whirled and danced about his master in a frenzy of joy. He leaped up, trying to lick Ed's face, then, with his black and tan body wriggling delightedly, he crouched on the floor, his sturdy forelegs spread, his tail stub waving, and the imps of fun dancing in his eyes.

"The old lad thinks we're going hunting," Ed thought bitterly. "So we are, but not the kind of hunting he's been used to. Suppose I did get a job. What a life for a dog—cooped up in a big town like this!"

Slowly the Airedale sensed that they were not going hunting after all. He whined eagerly, per-

plexedly, and, rearing up, planted his strong forepaws on Ed's coat. He looked searchingly into the tanned face above him.

The dog's action brought poignantly to mind the days when Derry had been a puppy; when, uncertain of what was expected of him, he would rear up like this and look steadfastly, inquiringly, into his master's face. That memory called up others. Memories of long days on mountain rivers, of nights spent in camps beneath the throbbing stars while the eternal chant of Northland rivers lulled him and Derry and old Mac to rest; memories of grueling days and nights of winter travel when, for mile after mile, the staunch hearted Airedale had endured cold and hunger; of the previous winter when Derry and Mac had been in harness with the other dogs on the mail sled, and when, for week after week, they had broken trail among the snow wrapped evergreens which stood along the valleys like tireless sentries robed in white. It all came back to Ed, and then the visions receded and a wave of homesickness for the old life overcame him.

"Me a garage mechanic in a big town—you being led out evenings on a leash like some swell lady's poodle!" he exclaimed bitterly. "Old-timer, we're going to get into the wilds again if we got to crawl there on our hands and knees. Come on."

Before the door was well opened Derry crowded through and raced down the unswept stairway to the sidewalk. He trotted jauntily ahead as Ed

struck off up the street toward the pawn shop. Holding his head and tail ridiculously high, every muscle of his close knit body a-quiver with pent-up energy, his eyes and nose and ears took in all the strangeness of the busy scene. Once, midway up the block, Derry would have dashed across the street, unmindful of the hazard of heavy traffic, had not Ed called him sharply to heel.

"They call that jay-walking here," Ed warned him; then, glancing across the street, he saw the cause of Derry's recklessness. A man stood in the doorway of a store and beside him was a small, ludicrously bewhiskered wire-haired terrier. The young man, dressed like Ed in clothes which were certain evidence he was not a resident of Vancouver, must have seen Derry's ill advised attempt to strike up an acquaintance. He was grinning broadly. Ed grinned back and continued on his way.

A few minutes later, when he had pocketed the three dollars and the ticket the pawnbroker had given him, Ed crossed the street and turned to the left where, half a block away, the white front of the "Big Eats" café broke the line of unkempt secondhand stores, pool rooms, stores of loggers' and fishermen's gear and the various other places of amusement and business common to water fronts of the North Pacific coast.

With Derry crowding eagerly at his heels, Ed entered the café. It was a plain, unadorned place,

but it was clean and from experience Ed knew the food was good. The score of longshoremen, loggers and other workers intent on stowing away the hearty meals in front of them added to the wholesome masculinity of the café. Unlike more garish restaurants uptown, people came here not to dawdle at table but to perform the serious business of eating and, when that had been done, to get out.

Ed was mounting one of the stools at the long counter when a waiter, spying Derry, looked significantly from him to Ed then jerked his thumb toward the door.

“You seen the sign? Better park him outside,” he suggested.

“Trouble is, he won’t stay parked worth a hoot. Be tangling with a three-ton truck if I don’t keep an eye on him,” Ed explained. “I’ll see he lies quiet beside me.”

The waiter glanced uncertainly at Derry but when he saw the dog looking at him with tongue dangling and mouth open in a provocative grin his sternness melted. “Guess it’s all right so long the boss don’t spot him,” he stated with a wink at Ed.

Ed motioned for Derry to lie at his feet and the dog, knowing well enough that he had been put on his good behavior, obeyed with a studied show of meekness. Flattening himself as low as he possibly could, he allowed his ears to droop. With tail stub clamped tightly down and with a lamblike innocence in his eyes, he looked up at his master.

"See me effacing myself, everybody," his expression said. "Did you ever meet a more angelic, docile, harmless dog? Did you? Why, I'm a parlor dog I am. Nobody could possibly object to my being in here." He seemed to positively enjoy the unaccustomed part he was playing.

Ed gave his modest order, adding, "and some scraps for the pup if you can wangle 'em," then reached along the counter for a newspaper which was propped between the ironstone sugar bowl and the ketchup bottle. His disillusioning two weeks in search of work had taught him to turn directly to the "Help Wanted" columns of every newspaper in the city. "Here's hoping," he thought as he began to read down the column headed "Help Wanted—Male."

As he read item after item he found nothing more promising than on other days. "'Wanted, Competent Bookkeeper.' A fat chance!" he mused. "'Wanted, university graduate.' 'Wanted—man with some capital as partner in'— Guess that bird thinks he's funny."

"'Wanted Experienced Salesman.' What a hope! Me, I couldn't sell a life belt to a drowning man." He read on down the list of salesmen and agents wanted, he even read the "Business Opportunities" in an adjoining column. Then his eye strayed to the "Situations Wanted—Male," and his mouth was grim as he noted that the list of men advertising for work was fully twice as long as the

list of jobs offered. In this last section his eye fell on an item which showed him with startling clarity how hopeless was his search for the kind of work he wanted. It read:

“\$50.00. I am a skilled motor mechanic and will pay the above sum to anyone who secures me steady work at my trade. Make it snappy.”

He paused for a long moment over that; then, as if to make himself believe that such desperate measures were no concern of his, Ed began another column called, “Wanted, with Investment.” As he studied the items he realized his own unfitness for the life of cities. So much of it was foreign to him; so much of it he did not understand. He seemed an outsider to this complicated scheme of things. Up north where he had been raised, life was often hard and demanding, but also it was direct and straightforward, simplified to its primitive elements. Hard manual work, trapping, hunting, running the mail, freighting on the big rivers—such employment as this he knew and could do. But it was not the sort of work people wanted done in cities.

The waiter was bringing his order and Ed was about to lay the paper aside when for some reason he could not explain, either then or afterward, his eye came to rest on the short list of “Personals.” He was hungry, but even with the food in front of him some perverseness made him glance at the

items. Though they gave no promise of providing the thing he sought, he read item after item, surprised to find that here, of all places, were the graphic outlines of romance, tragedy and adventure. Cryptic messages of conciliation, appeals for missing men and women to write home, terse messages that "all is forgiven—come"; they were all there. And at the foot of the list, in a place where it really did not belong at all, he discovered a notice that brought animation to his lean face and tightened the grip of his big hands on the newspaper. As he read it again its few lines stood out from the page. They seemed to promise him all he had been hoping for that day—an escape from the city, and a return to the outdoor life he loved and for which he was highly fitted. He read the notice again, his lips moving soundlessly as he absorbed its every word:

"PERSONAL INTERVIEW WANTED, with active young man not afraid of roughing it. Must be resourceful and used to living in isolated part of country. Apply immediately, Mr. Allan, Room 215 Buffalo Building, between 1 and 4 P. M."

A moment later a surprised and disappointed Derry was marching with his master to the café door while their meal stood, steaming and untouched, upon the counter.

IN spite of his regret at leaving good food on the counter of the "Big Eats," Derry pranced eagerly at Ed's side as they started along the street. Long ago he had learned to shrewdly interpret his master's every change of mood, and now he knew that excitement of some kind was afoot. There was a quick purposefulness in Ed's stride and, as he trotted abreast of him, Derry kept looking up with bright inquiry.

"What's the game?" he seemed to be asking. "I'm ready for anything."

But by the time they turned the corner, it was evident that the Airedale was not ready for what Ed had in store for him. On other occasions when he had gone into the more congested part of the city, Ed had wisely left his dog confined in the rooming house. And Derry was not long in guessing that he was to be left there again. Very slowly his tail lost its jauntiness; his ears went limp and, instead of keeping slightly in the lead, he began to lag. He seemed suddenly to have become aware of a host of scents and sounds along the street and, strangely enough, they all were behind Ed and in the opposite direction to the rooming house.

"Well, it's your own fault, son," Ed told him. "Ever since we hit town I been telling you to keep

off the road. Motor trucks aren't bears, remember. They won't tree worth a hoot. But all the time you keep forgetting. Step along now."

Derry looked up with outraged innocence. His look implied that it was not his fault if all these interesting things delayed him. He was a dog and he had a lot of affairs to attend to which no thick skulled human could understand. When Ed ordered him sharply to heel, his aggrieved expression said, "Oh, all right, if you're going to get bull-headed about it. But you're missing a mighty important smell. Don't say I didn't warn you."

Half way down the block a street car gong jangled impatiently at a dray which was blocking the track. Derry stopped again. He barked commandingly and looked toward Ed. "Man alive! You're not going to let him get away with that, are you?" his look implied. But Ed's face told him that all such diversion was useless and thereafter he kept stolidly at his master's heels. Glum, but obedient, he followed Ed up the dark stairway and waited while the room door was unlocked.

After the open air, the room seemed oppressively hot. The early afternoon sunlight beat upon the unshaded window and before he left Ed opened the sash a few inches at top and bottom.

"Won't be longer than I can help. Be good, old boy," he said as he went out.

When his master's footsteps died away on the stairway, Derry wedged his muzzle as far as he

could into the slit between the window sill and the bottom of the sash. The veranda roof outside hid his master's departing figure, but the dog's ears were lifted as if to catch his footfalls through the noises of the street. He whined protestingly and then, sighting a flock of Japanese starlings gossiping in the spring sunlight on the roof opposite, his tail began to wag. Unattainable though they were, they held his interest for fully a quarter of an hour.

During that quarter of an hour Ed lost no time in walking uptown to the Buffalo building and locating the office of Mr. Allan, in room 215. "W. J. Allan, Barrister and Solicitor," he read on the glass of the door, and entered to tell his business to the clerk in the outer office.

The clerk indicated a seat near the door.

"Mr. Allan will see you presently," he stated, when he came out of the private office.

To the anxious youth it seemed more like an hour than ten minutes before a buzzer sounded and the clerk, indicating the inner door, told him he might go in.

Mr. Allan, a large man with shrewd but not unkindly mouth and eyes, was sitting back in his swivel chair looking at him when Ed turned from closing the door.

"I came about that want ad. you had in the paper," Ed began awkwardly. "I figure I can handle that job."

"What are your grounds for the, er—assumption?"

"Well, I'm used to the outdoors. Been working round in the Twin Forks country up north ever since I was a kid. Raised there. Anybody in that country'd tell you about me."

The artless honesty of this last remark seemed to please Mr. Allan. He clasped his hands on his copious waistcoat and studied the youth. "What is your name again?" he asked.

"Sibley."

"Please sit down." Ed took the chair near the corner of the desk, laid his broad brimmed felt hat on his knees and tried not to look too anxious.

"I had better tell you something about the work for which you are applying, Sibley," Mr. Allan began. "It's quite an unusual job and, on behalf of my client, I must find a man with unusual qualifications for it. I had in mind some one more—more mature. However, we shall see about that. Age is not the first requirement. Have you, by any chance, ever done any game-protective work?"

"Not with animals, sir. I did work a couple seasons for Mister Hughes, him that's superintendent of the government fishery patrol up Twin Forks way. But I know wild birds and animals pretty good. Fella gets to, knocking round in the hills like I been."

"You're accustomed to being alone? Weeks of solitude won't get on your nerves?"

“No sir,” Ed stated emphatically. “Anyhow I got an Airedale that’s most as good company as a human. Better than some.”

“Very good.” Mr. Allan sat up. The preliminaries were over and he was getting down to business with his caller. “This tract my client owns is some two hundred miles up the coast. On the map it is shown as Totem Creek. My client had unusual plans for it. He returned to the east after giving me definite instructions concerning what he wanted done—and more particularly *not* done—to it, and since then, well to be frank, it seems to have become a discarded hobby. However my instructions hold. I suppose you wonder at my telling you all this, Sibley?”

“Yes sir, sort of,” Ed stated, quite truthfully. It did seem strange that a man like Mr. Allan should disclose such matters to a stranger. What Ed did not know was that the lawyer, out of a lifetime of studying human nature, had already made up his mind that this youth from the north might be the employee he was looking for. There were other matters to be settled yet, of course, but already he had a shrewd idea that Sibley might do, might do very nicely, for the unusual position. Memories of thirty years ago told him this youth was genuine.

“It’s natural you should wonder a bit,” Mr. Allan was continuing. “But the fact is, I must have

a man at Totem Creek I can trust. You'll likely never so much as see the owner of this tract, and, except for a monthly letter from me enclosing your check, you'll not hear from this office either. You will be absolutely on your own, you understand?"

"You mean, sir—you mean I've landed the job?" Ed asked quickly. It seemed too good to be true.

"I think I can say you have. Personally I'm quite satisfied. There will be the formality of identification and such like. You have a responsible friend or two in town who'll recommend you?"

Ed, crestfallen, shook his head.

"Don't know a soul," he admitted. "All my friends are in the Twin Forks country," he added anxiously.

"Very well. We'll telegraph. Let me have the names of, say, the two most responsible people you know there," and Mr. Allan drew a scratch pad to him and picked up a pen.

Ed did some quick thinking. Old Sandy Hoskins, who had taken him under his wing when he was a mere youngster, who had taught him much of the life of river and trail, would be sure to do all he could. But Sandy had left Twin Forks and was prospecting again, this time in the new country farther north, away from the railway and the government telegraph line. He must try some one else.

"There's Tomlinson, of the Mounted Police at Division. And I guess Billy Devon would tell you

about me. He's postmaster at Summit City. I ran the mail for him last winter. Or Superintendent Hughes of the fisheries, or Bert Olson or—"

"Hold on, hold on, m'boy. I'm not engaging a bank president," the lawyer chuckled. "I haven't a doubt in the world these men will vouch for you. Formally, however, I can't engage you until we hear from them. That won't be until tomorrow. I'm taking the Seattle boat tonight, but I'll leave orders with my clerk to advance you expense money and sign you on tomorrow after I have replies from these two gentlemen. We'll assume the job's yours and now I'll tell you what's to be done. First we'll have a look at the map." He rang the buzzer.

"The Totem Creek file, please," he said, when the clerk appeared.

While the map was being brought, Ed sat movelessly on the edge of his chair, revelling in a host of speculations. A job in that rugged up-coast country, an outdoor job, he and Derry on their own again, he thought. Never for a moment did he doubt that Billy Devon and the Mountie would vouch for his honesty. Out of the past came a warming gratitude to good old Sandy Hoskins; old Sandy, with his homely teaching, who years ago had hammered into his headstrong young protégé the frontier saying that "a square shooter can always back-track." Well, thanks to Sandy, Ed told himself he could back-track. There were no shady dealings, no slipshod work for either Tomlinson or Devon to

remember. Only it did seem strange that Mr. Allan should be so confident about him.

“Pull your chair around here, Sibley,” Mr. Allan said as he spread the large-scale map of the coast on the desk. “Here, see, is the Totem Creek property. Survey lines were run on it years ago. Probably you’ll have to brush them out when you get there, but you can see the tract covers some forty square miles. Here near where the creek flows into the sea are the ruins of an old Indian village. Your main work is to see that neither the wild life nor the old village is molested. Though you have no legal authority, beyond the fact that you represent the owners, you are to take whatever action you deem necessary to keep the property in its natural state. Here, at Salmon Point, some sixty miles south, is a trading post. A provincial policeman is stationed there. Get in touch with him if you need the law to back you up. I expect you to use your own judgment. Remember, you will be held responsible. Now is there anything you want to ask?”

There were a hundred things Ed wanted to ask, but he forced himself to curb his natural curiosity and ask only about things it was necessary for him to know here and now.

“I’d like to know about outfitting. Is there a cabin or anything?”

“There is no shelter of any kind. You’ll have to build a cabin for yourself.”

“And I’m not to let anybody hunt or fish on the place?”

“Nobody. What you need for food yourself you may take, providing you do it in such a way as not to alarm the other game. I understand there are some Indian relics scattered about the old village. There’s also an abandoned native burying ground. Nothing in either place is to be removed by anyone. It’s no longer an Indian reserve. The band has been scattered for many years.”

Ed fingered his hat thoughtfully. In a general way he saw what was expected of him. And until he saw Totem Creek there wasn’t much use plying the lawyer with questions. Sandy’s maxim, “Use your eyes and not your mouth” seemed to fit this case exactly. “I guess that’s all then, sir,” he stated, as he stood up. “Except I’d kind of like to have a map.”

“Certainly. There’ll be one here from the lands office for you in the morning.” Mr. Allan stood up. “I think we may call it settled then,” he added with a queer suggestion of a smile. “I don’t anticipate any trouble over those recommendations. You’ll do. You see, m’boy, I know Billy Devon. He and I were together in the Yukon, thirty-two years ago—during the rush of ’98—in the days before I worked the itch for adventure out of my blood,” he added with just a hint of wistfulness. “In those days the job and not the money interested me. You’re still enjoying such days—otherwise you’d

have asked about your wages," he went on with a chuckle. "The rate is seventy-five a month—and you find your own grub."

"Good enough," Ed assured him, grinning. "Any time me and the dog can't live in the woods on fifteen a month, we'll try something else. Sixty a month clear! What better could a fella want?"

"It's not much, I know."

"So long as I like the work. That's the main thing with me, Mr. Allan."

"May you always look at life that way." The lawyer's handshake was almost paternal. "Good-by."

As Ed shut the door behind him and passed through the outer office he felt an absurd desire to go over to Mr. Allan's pompous little clerk and slap him jovially on the back. And as he strode down the street to his water front rooming house, the blitheness of his whistle more than made up for its lack of musical quality.

FOR five minutes after Ed had gone away, Derry stood at the window, eyeing with interest the convention which the Japanese starlings were holding on the roof opposite. They seemed to have a good sense of fun, did those black birds with the white circles on their wings and the ludicrous crest of feathers at the base of their bills. They reminded him of the jays he had delighted to squabble with at many a camp and cabin in the Twin Forks country.

He regarded them with a kindling eye. If a fellow could get out of this stupid room he might have some fun with those johnnies. Look at them across there, gossiping for all they were worth like a crowd of bumptious old ladies at a tea meeting. See that one waddling along the ridge of the roof. Wowzers! What wouldn't he give for the chance to put a little more life into that party! Surely Ed didn't expect him to lie doggo with all this going on.

Derry shifted his forepaws along the sill and craned his neck for a better look. And supposing Ed did think he'd lie quiet—did that mean he was going to? Not by a jugful! His paws dropped from the sill and he trotted to the door. He clawed at it.

No luck. He prodded it with a stiff foreleg. Drat it! It wouldn't so much as rattle. Derry galloped back to the window and looked out, more excited than ever.

The very fact that he saw no way of escape made the street seem more inviting. Again he jammed his muzzle into the opening below the sash. Two excited tan paws came up, one on each side of his nose. Clawing for a foothold with his hind legs, he strained forward and upward with all his might. An impatient sound, half whine, half exasperation, came from him. The edge of the sash was hard and sharp but that did not stop him from bearing hard against it. Quite unexpectedly it yielded. The opening was six inches wide now. With a short clipped yelp of triumph he pressed with all the strength of his tough neck. It slid higher still. A moment later Derry was on the gently sloping roof of the rooming house porch.

As he braced himself gingerly and looked down into the street his white teeth showed in an elated grin. His tail was erect and wagging, his forehead wrinkled in droll good humor. "Hello, Vancouver, here I am!" he seemed to be saying. Vancouver didn't even see him. Not a truck, nor a street car, nor a human being in the street below stopped to look. The starlings chattered at him, but now, with the whole street spread out at his feet, they were small game indeed. He ignored them.

Look at all those people down there, would you,

and not one of them with gumption enough to discover where he was. Derry barked sharply. "Ladies and gentlemen, take a look, take a look. You don't see a sight like me every day," he tried to inform them. But in spite of his best effort to attract their attention, the first to discover him was a dog—the little, bewhiskered wire-haired terrier he had seen earlier that day.

The terrier and his master were strolling idly along the far sidewalk when the terrier heard the Airedale's bark ring out above the street noises. He stopped and looked about him and, while he stood there puzzled, Derry saw him and launched a succession of rapid barks. "I'm up here, brother," his bark explained and, in order to catch the little terrier's eye, he began prancing gingerly back and forth, perilously close to the edge of the roof. The terrier saw him and answered with a sharp yelp of greeting.

The man, following his dog's glance, looked across, and when the astonishing sight met his eyes he grinned. A lounge in a near-by doorway saw him looking up and, when he in turn spied the Airedale on the roof, he relayed the news to two loggers who were about to enter the door behind him.

"Son-uv-a-gun!" one of them chuckled and waited to see what was going to happen.

Knowledge that at last he had an audience of grown men affected Derry in much the same way as it would a small boy. At the risk of his neck he

chased back and forth on the roof, barking at them, at the motor cars, at everything in the street.

"Go to it, ol' trapper," one of the loggers shouted encouragingly.

Derry responded with such vigor that a window at the extreme end of the roof opened. The rooming-house proprietor, a sad faced person with a straggling moustache, looked out to see what the matter was. And when he saw Derry, there was resentment in his faded eyes. In his long career as keeper of water front rooming houses he had had to put up with a great deal. Sailors, loggers, long-shoremen, fishermen, prospectors, they all had to be watched. But this was the first time a dog had ever got on his roof and disturbed the peace.

"Beat it, you," he snapped.

The shouts took Derry by surprise. He whirled and, with body braced to offset the slope of the roof, he regarded the proprietor with a joyful eye.

"Good egg," he yodeled. "You coming out to join the show?" The obvious badinage in his tones brought loud laughter from across the street. A passing truck driver discovered the cause of their merriment and, though there was no parking space, he came to a stop and leaned out of the cab to see the fun.

"Get outa that, blast you!" the proprietor yelled.

Derry replied with a bark which sounded suspiciously like "Blah!"

The knowledge that he was being made a fool of in front of the growing audience across the street was too much for the rooming-house keeper. Arming himself with a broom, he crawled stiffly through his window and brandished his weapon. Instead of retreating, Derry advanced in stiff legged jumps. Again and again he barked in a frenzy of joy. When he saw that the man had accepted his invitation and was actually crawling toward him, his voice broke under the excitement and with high pitched yelps Derry urged him to exert himself.

Utterly regardless of the hazards of his sloping stage, Derry began to race back and forth before the slowly advancing man. He knew that he could not be cornered for, if the worst came to the worst, he could get off the roof the way he had come. But to the men below it seemed that he must surely fall.

The wire-haired terrier's master was the first to see that the affair was past the joking stage. The proprietor was plainly in a towering rage, and the sooner the Airedale was taken off the roof the better.

"He'll bust a leg or something," he said to the men in the doorway.

"What can y'do?" the loungers asked.

At that moment the terrier's master noted that the truck which had just stopped in front of him bore the name of a contracting firm and that out of its rear end a ladder protruded. He ran out and began talking to the driver.

Derry had been so engrossed in exasperating his sour visaged playmate that he knew nothing of what was afoot until he caught the thud of the ladder being set against the edge of the roof.

He looked down. The big truck had halted all wheeled traffic on the far side of the street. The roadway was rapidly filling and excited shouts mingled with the impatient blare of klaxons. With an audience like that, did anybody think he was going to get off that roof? Not much.

But when the head of the terrier's master appeared over the edge, and when Derry felt the cool authority behind his, "Come here," he wavered. The man, who knew dogs, spoke as if he meant what he said. Not harshly or impatiently, but with an even, unruffled confidence. "Come here," he repeated and this time Derry knew the game was up. One eye on the proprietor, who, with a muttered "*You better git,*" was crawling back to his window, he sidled toward the man on the ladder. A moment later a strong arm encircled his body and he was carried down to the street.

The instant they reached the bottom he wriggled free and found himself face to face with the wire-haired terrier.

Though scarcely more than half Derry's size, the terrier's dignity gave the impression that he—and he alone—was the one to say whether there was to be any friendliness between them. He held his head absurdly high and looked at Derry down his be-

whiskered muzzle after the manner of a white bearded judge about to pronounce sentence. There was a good humored twinkle in Derry's eye as he submitted to the scrutiny. And when at last the smaller dog's tail stub began to signal a greeting, Derry's own tail wagged so vigorously that the rear half of his body wagged with it.

In spite of their inborn sense of fun and their aggressiveness, few breeds of dogs observe the rules of canine etiquette so carefully as terriers. And once a friendship has been made between two members of this great hearted clan, it is not likely to be forgotten. Their ears lifted and they abandoned the stiff legged pose of meeting to touch noses.

Suddenly springing back, Derry crouched, his head low between his wide-spread forepaws in an invitation to romp. The other, with a waggish look in his brown eyes, was beginning to circle in mock craftiness, when the game was broken up by the man, as he returned from replacing the ladder in the truck.

"Time we were moving on, Bo," the terrier's master said.

Derry shot a quick look from the man to Bo as if asking, "What's he saying?" But the small dog's change of manner told him all too well what had been said. With a regretful backward look the small terrier started to move off behind his master.

Derry's mouth opened and, placing his head on

one side, he seemed to be asking what the big idea was. Then when the obedient Bo did not so much as give him a backward look he barked sharply. "Hey, wait a minute," the bark meant.

As he trotted after his new found friend, Derry avoided the error of following too closely. If he did that the man would no doubt tell him to go home. But if he seemed to be going their way quite by chance, no one could have anything to say about it. With an elaborate air of nonchalance he came abreast of them. They were walking on the extreme inner edge of the wide sidewalk, so he chose the outer one. He pretended not to be aware they existed. His gaze was fixed on some imaginary object far up the street. But he did not fool the man.

"You better hang round that rooming house till your boss shows up. Go home now," the man warned.

Derry looked up at him with pleased surprise.

"Fancy us meeting like this!" his look conveyed.

"Home!"

Derry regarded the finger leveled at him with outraged innocence. He tried to make the man understand that this meeting was none of his planning. Couldn't a fellow walk along the street without being ordered about in this rude way? But the man, versed in the guile of terriers, was not to be deceived.

"You heard. Home you go."

Instantly Derry's manner changed. He tried to appear very willing, very eager to please, but his puckered forehead and lifted ears said, "I'm not a very bright dog, mister. Please don't bother with me. I can't make out a word you say. Tell you what. You jog along and just forget about me. I'll muddle through somehow. I know you mean well, but it's no use."

A person unacquainted with the wiles of dogs would have been fooled by Derry's show of genial stupidity. Not so the terrier's master. He crossed the sidewalk and stood directly in front of the Aire-dale. "Forget the comedy, old boy. Can't have you tagging after us." He raised his arm and pointed back toward the rooming house. "Go home," he ordered with a finality which left Derry no choice but to obey. His tail went down and then, looking back at the man as if hoping against hope he would change his mind, Derry began to return.

Midway of the block he stopped and sat on the curb. It was not a comfortable place to rest but, with one foreleg awkwardly outthrust, he found gloomy satisfaction in making himself appear even more uncomfortable than need be. He felt himself a sadly misunderstood dog. These humans were impossible creatures, quite impossible. There he'd been going about his own business, nice as you please, and that master of Bo's had got the absurd notion that he had been following him. As if a

busy Airedale hadn't more important matters than that to attend to!

His moment of disgust made him feel better. He got up with a return of his usual vigor, shook himself, and hunched into a half circle while he scratched his neck with a hind paw. A man striding past narrowly avoided stumbling over him. Derry looked severely after the man to demand who in thunder he thought he was pushing. This assertion of a dog's rights brought renewed confidence and, with a stubborn look in his eye, he started warily to retrace his steps in search of Bo. Good fellows like that were not to be picked up on every street corner, and he had no intention of losing track of the little chap.

A short distance beyond where he had left him, Derry found Bo sitting stiffly in the narrow entrance to a barber shop. His tail signaling his delight at the reunion, Derry trotted toward him. Then, chancing to look through the plate glass window, Derry recognized the little terrier's master seated in the first of the row of barber chairs. He pretended not to recognize him and with an airy glance of farewell was moving discreetly away, when the screen door of the barber shop was hurled open and a huge mongrel dog confronted Bo with teeth bared and the hair on his shoulders angrily erect.

For just a second Bo seemed bewildered, but his

master had ordered him to remain here and he had no way of knowing he was occupying the bullying dog's favorite lounging place.

"Grab him. He'll kill that little feller," some one inside the shop shouted.

Things happened with startling suddenness. Before his master could leave the barber chair, Bo was pluckily facing the bully. His defiance of the big street dog would have been fatally short, but at that instant, seemingly from nowhere, Derry came charging in like a black and tan streak. On the instant he stood between Bo and his assailant his manner underwent a complete change. He was no longer jaunty, free and easy.

Every sinew in his sturdy body was taut. His tail was stiffly erect, his head up and compactly drawn in. Not the slightest sound came from him, and yet the bully hesitated, for he read Derry's chilling and invincible resolve. Derry did not even look at him; his gaze seemed fixed on some unseen thing ahead. Yet his whole pose conveyed the grim warning, "I'm not looking for trouble, but if you start anything you'll have to fight me to the bitter finish."

For a moment the big dog seemed inclined to strike, and then he looked away and his feet shifted uneasily. He snarled. Derry might have been stone deaf for all the attention he paid to the threat. His every muscle was like a spring coiled to strike. The attacker turned, hoping to find an opening, but

quick as light Derry faced him and again stood motionless and ready. Disconcerted, the big dog began backing into the shop. It was not the Airedale's size which had made him hesitate. He had defeated larger dogs than this one, but in Derry's bearing of invincible determination there had been something more formidable than mere size. Still snarling, but with the fight gone out of him, the bully retreated to the rear of the shop.

As he departed Derry's body relaxed. He touched noses with Bo as if lightly saying, "And that's that, old-timer." But a moment later, when Bo's master left the shop and joined them in the doorway, the note of praise in his voice told Derry he had made a real friend.

TWENTY minutes later, when Ed came briskly down the street, he found the man with the wire-haired terrier sitting on the rooming-house steps waiting for him.

The man smiled at Ed's astonished look when he saw the Airedale he had left locked in his room upstairs standing on the sidewalk grinning impishly at him.

"He got out all right," the man chuckled. "Pretty near tied up street traffic doing it. The old bird that runs this dump was so mad at him his eyes were popping out so far you could knock 'em off with a bottle. Haven't laughed so much since I came to town." Then he told Ed of Derry's antics on the roof. "No harm done unless the old bird is still packing a grouch."

"Won't make much difference if he is," Ed replied. "I'm headed up the coast tomorrow."

"So? I come from up that way."

"Yeah? Well thanks for getting Derry off the roof for me. Might easy have had a nasty fall."

"That's all right. Anyhow he sort of squared things after. Big bruiser of a fighting dog jumped Bo here. You should have seen your pup horn in. No fight, but the tough egg saw he was dynamite and he laid off."

Ed looked with increased interest at the other. He was perhaps ten years older than Ed and in the lapel of his faded coat Ed saw the Canada war veteran's button, with its terse inscription, "For service at the front." And as he got to his feet Ed noted how the man raised himself altogether with his left leg, as if the other had been hurt. Then, realizing that his scrutiny had been noted, Ed felt embarrassed.

"Well, I better be dangling," the veteran stated shortly.

Ed felt an impulsive friendliness toward him. Though he could not have described it, even to himself, the other's manner had a hint of aloofness, as if his war injury made him feel set apart and somehow inferior to more active men. Ed had heard other partially disabled veterans refer to themselves with intense bitterness as "crocks," and he imagined that, like them, this man's habitual resentment at his handicap had made him lonely and embittered.

"Look here," Ed proposed. "How about coming up to the room for a bit? You're not doing anything?"

"Nothing special."

"Come on then. We can talk dogs, and I'd like to hear about the up-coast country."

Though he hesitated, Ed saw that the man really wanted to come, so pushing open the door he led the way up the stairs. Derry and his new found

friend crowded past them and when the room door was unlocked the former ushered Bo in as if he were the real tenant of the room.

"There's how he got onto the roof," the veteran explained, pointing at the half open window.

"Got his old bean under it and heaved," Ed surmised. "Here, take the chair," he added, pushing it toward his visitor.

As soon as the man lowered himself into the old arm chair, Bo sprang into his lap and curled up there. As he snuggled down Ed noted how the man's hand went around the terrier's shoulders in an unconscious attitude of protection.

"Bo's getting on," the man explained simply. "Not so spry as he used to be. Don't know for sure, but he must be about ten years old. No great shakes for looks, but I bet he's the only dog in this man's town went through the war."

"He did?" Ed could hardly believe his ears. "He's seen more'n me, then. I was a few years too young to ring in on that."

"You didn't miss anything," the veteran stated significantly. "Course lots of dogs, mascots and such like, got picked up by outfits in France, but none of them were allowed to be taken out of the country after the big 'do.' Government rules were that all animals had to stay there. Might have spread disease to other countries, y'see. Sure was a shame. But Bo, he had a pull with headquarters. And, believe me, he earned it."

“How?” Ed asked tensely. He sensed a strange story and was afraid his very eagerness might spoil his chances of hearing it. “Say! I’d give anything to hear about it.”

The other studied him for a few seconds. “You’re a dog fan, and since this is Bo’s story—not mine—I’ll spill it if only to show how much that Derry dog did for me by standing off that big bruiser. If he’d of grabbed Bo across the neck I never could have got out of that chair in time to save him.”

Ed, leaning forward, his elbows on his knees, waited.

“This here all happened at Ypres, and Ypres was about the hottest shop on the Western front,” the veteran whose name was Benson, began. “I was a runner with a machine gun company and that night we’d just come back out of the line. Being a runner, I was on duty at the company orderly room long after the rest of the bunch had flopped in the stables and sheds along the main drag of this shell-shocked Flemish village. We were about all in.”

As Benson continued, Ed could picture the trench-weary gun crews sprawled on the dirty straw of their billets, drugged with sleep. Miles away the howitzers growled and thudded brutally, and the star shells traced their faint arcs across the blackboard of the sky.

“The orderly-room sergeant we had was one of

these fussy birds, and I guess he got my goat more'n usual that night. But anyhow, about midnight, when he told me I could turn in, believe you me, I lost no time doing it. My billet was pretty well at the end of the street and, as I headed for it, a battalion of Frenchies—Alpine *chasseurs* they were—came slogging through the village. Man, it was dark. You could just see a slung rifle here and there against the sky and below them the line of shrapnel helmets swinging up and down as they passed me.

"It would be mebbe ten minutes after that I'd spread out my groundsheet, wrapped my blanket and greatcoat round me and flopped in the straw. I was just dropping off when I heard a kind of whine somewhere close. I sat up and struck a match. There he was." Here Benson indicated the wire-haired terrier curled in his lap.

"Well, I'll be dinged," Ed broke in softly.

"That's about what I said. He was muddy and pretty near all in, I could see that. Not much more'n a pup, he wasn't, and I figgered he'd been following the *chasseurs*.

"'Better join your unit, buddy,' I told him. 'You'll be A.W.O.L.' No need to say I wanted to keep him, but there were strict orders from Division H.Q. against it, and a military policeman had been snooping round last time we were in billets, trying to win a medal for himself by shooting stray dogs. I even crawled out and headed the shivering

little pup up the street, but he'd made up his mind to stick. So I gave up and tucked him under the greatcoat along with me.

“ ‘You lie quiet and stop scratching,’ I told him, ‘or you’ll get me started, bo.’ Well sir, when I said ‘bo’ he looked at me just like that was his name. Seemed to suit him too, being short and small.” At the mention of the name Ed saw Bo lift his head and look at his master with drowsy affection.

“Anyhow, I was just getting to sleep right,” Benson went on, “when the sentry came to the door and hollered that the sergeant wanted me in the orderly room. Mebbe I wasn’t rory-eyed. But of course, I put on my putties and went and, tired as he was, the pup turned out and came with me. That kind of got under my skin that did. Showed it was a pal more’n a warm bed he was looking for. Right there I made up my mind to hang onto him long’s I could.

“When I got to the orderly room the sergeant handed me a message that he said had to go right away to Major Howard. Howard was our O.C. and was billeted at a farm about a mile away. The message was marked “Urgent” but when I read it all it said was some routine about turning in old gas helmets. I was sore, but the serg. said it had to go, so off I went, grouching like four of a kind.”

Benson then described how, when he was half way to the farm, he saw the dimmed lights of a motor lorry approaching, and how he stepped off

the road, thinking that the little terrier at his heels had done the same. But as the lorry rumbled past he heard a yelp of pain and ran out to find the terrier writhing in the road.

“I felt all over him, and though there were no broken bones he was cut and bruised considerable. He needed bandaging and then and there I kicked over the traces. That routine message could go to blazes. I’d run it over first thing in the morning, and now I’d get the pup back to billets and fix him up. I did just that, but boy! It was a bad mistake.

“In the morning, I was turning out before the rest of the gang when a staff car swooped down the hill. I looked out and saw Major Howard coming out of the orderly room to meet it. I thought at the time that was mighty queer.

“The guy in the car was the O.C. of the whole machine gun battalion and mebbe he wasn’t giving Major Howard what-for!

“‘Can’t waste time getting to the bottom of this,’ I heard him tell Howard. ‘Either my signalers or your runner has let us down dashed badly. Carry on with that operation order.’

“Operation order! I knew what that meant. When the car raced away I dashed across the road and gave the Major the message I’d been given the night before. He looked at me pretty hard. ‘I’ll get your explanation later, Benson,’ he said. ‘This is prearranged code for a stand-to. I should have

had it at once. Ask all officers to report on the double.'

"Major Howard was one of the best," Benson went on. "He didn't try to pass the buck because I'd let him down, and believe me he had lots of cause to that day. Just before the outfit started to move back toward the front line after breakfast he came up to me and he said: 'Tell me how this happened, Benson.'

"So I told him about the dog and about him being run over. 'Better turn him over to me,' was all he said, and then and there I figgered that would be the last I'd ever see of Bo."

Ed, enthraled, sat on the bed of this shabby water-front room and listened while Benson sketched for him how the company got back into the line that night; how by midnight the snub-nosed Vickers guns were in position again; how signal cable had been run out to the batteries and how Major Howard, Benson and Harris, the cockney signaler, had been installed in a shallow dugout in the side of a communication trench.

It was not until Benson had come in from a last round of the funkholes which served as battle positions for the guns, that he learned of the humanity and kindness of his commander. Beyond a blanket curtain at the far end of the dugout, the Major was working by candle light over his intricate fire orders, and against the blanket Benson discovered Bo, sitting looking at him.

“Harris, the signaler told me that the Major had brought Bo up from the horse lines. Carried him up under his trench coat so the cops wouldn’t spot him. Well, you know yourself a guy that likes dogs would do anything for a man like that.

“We stuck it out for days and it began to look like Heinie’s threatened attack was only a rumor after all. But, boy, it wasn’t.

“Bo got along fine. He used to trot around behind me and the Major and eat his bully beef with a shrapnel helmet for a feeding dish. He got to know the layout of the trenches as well as anybody.

“He was death on the trench rats. Sooner hunt ’em than eat, and one morning when I was going with the Major for a round of the batteries, he trotted ahead, large as life, his ears cocked, looking for ’em. It was a nice morning; June it was. Made you think of being back home in B. C. somewheres. I didn’t know it, but it was my last day of active service.”

Benson was leaning forward now, a prey to the tragic memories of that day. And as he talked, the walls of the dingy room faded before Ed’s eyes and he too walked the communication trench with Benson while the daylight strengthened and showed the ravaged flanks of the famous Hill 60 close ahead. Sanctuary Wood, once a pleasing copse but now with its crippled tree stubs and torn ground a cruel travesty of woodland, showed over the raw

rim of trench. Officer and private, equals in their fondness for dogs and for the out-of-doors, saw it and thought of their own, unravaged homeland, and felt for the thousandth time the brutal stupidity of war.

Allied and German fire was desultory, almost casual in the cool light of the dawn. They were almost to the first battery position when the threatened attack was launched.

His maxims sprayed the ground with traversing fire, every grazing bullet spattering mud like tufts plucked from the face of earth by greedy, unseen fingers, *minenwerfers* merged into a gigantic, drum-fire chorus. Bo's bark seemed a puny thing, the Major's shout inaudible as they raced up the trench for the signal buzzer at the battery shelter.

As they reached it, the battery captain came running up.

"Box barrage, sir. Every line cut," he shouted.

Crouching with his notebook on his knee, Major Howard wrote the few words which alone would save those inside the walls of the barrage. Benson the runner watched him.

As soldiers seeking cover from a bombardment huddle beneath the folds of greatcoat or groundsheet as they lie in their funkholes, so Benson pulled down his tin hat, and buttoned his pocket flaps after the manner of a man about to venture

out into a pelting rain. Major Howard looked him straight in the eyes and then handed him the S O S message.

"Get Harris to relay it to brigade H.Q.," he said.

"In all that uproar, I clean forgot I had a dog," Benson related to Ed Sibley. "I took one look at the barrage and I thought to myself, 'What a hope!' Seemed like if I had any chance of getting through, it would be by leaving the trench and going over the top. Trenches were being pounded flat anyhow. So up the parados I went and started back hard's ever I could go.

"But I wasn't fifty feet on my way till I saw Bo had given the Major the slip and was at my heels. With the lives of a couple hundred men depending on that S O S getting through, I had no time to lose with him. So I plugged on, and him with me.

"The barrage was close ahead of me. It looked like a wall made up of spouting mud, smoke and the red flashes of shrapnel. I figgered my number was up. I tucked the little feller under my arm and started through. Then a chunk of shell casing took me in the knee and I flopped.

"When I rolled over Bo was licking my face. You'd think any dog would o' got back to the trench and out of that trap, but not him. All he gave a hoot about was me. First thing I knew I was tying that S O S message to his collar and yelling for him to 'Go find Harris.'

“Y’know, he savvied, but he was all for sticking with me. I had to get mad, and I remember heaving a chunk of mud at him to get him started. Once he saw I meant it, he was off like a shot. An’ about then I passed out for the count.”

Benson paused, moistened his lips. Ed saw he was smiling again. “When I came to it was night and I was in the casualty clearing station at the railhead. An orderly from machine gun headquarters handed me a message from Major Howard. ‘I’ll look after Bo for you,’ the message read.

“Good old Major Howard! He kep’ his word. Don’t ask me how he wangled it. I figger he smuggled Bo across the channel to England when he came on leave and that he fixed things with some pal on one of the liners to get him into Canada. Anyhow I got him when I landed on this side. An’ we been *tillicums* ever since,” Benson concluded triumphantly.

ED SIBLEY spent the remainder of the afternoon in Benson's company. His first liking for him had been strengthened by the latter's story of the heroic Bo's adventures, and Ed felt that in spite of the eight or ten years' difference in their ages, he and Benson had a lot in common. He regretted that their meeting should not have taken place until the very day before he was leaving the city. Probably after tomorrow they would never see each other again. And then he recalled Benson's having said he came from somewhere up the Coast.

"How far up are you located?" Ed asked. They were in the "Big Eats" where Ed was having a belated meal while Benson joined him in a cup of coffee. The two dogs sat outside the screen door, sniffing rather wistfully at the scents of food wafted out to them.

Benson was watching with amusement the efforts of both terriers to crowd through the screen door every time it was opened. But at Ed's question he swung around on the stool toward his companion.

"Quite a ways up. Just a bit of a settlement. Only twenty-five or thirty of us located there and

we find it hard sledding to make even enough to hang on, believe you me. Cedar Cove, they call the place."

"Name sounds good," Ed commented.

"But not much of a place to earn a living—not what we were led to believe when we took up homesteads there. It's a pretty place, though. There's a deep sort of bay with a small creek running in at the top end. Our places are scattered round about a mile up the creek from the salt chuck. Then there's a rocky point a few miles long and just south of that is an old Indian village. A place they call Totem Creek."

Ed stared, his mouth half open, a forkful of food poised. "Totem Creek?" he repeated.

"Ever been there?"

"Nope. But I'm going there. Landed the job today. Just before I met you."

Benson's manner changed.

"What kind of a job?" he asked, soberly.

Ed related something of what Mr. Allan had told him.

Benson looked hard at Ed and did not speak for a few seconds.

"Take my tip and steer clear of Totem Creek," he said earnestly.

"But—" Ed began.

"You don't know what you're taking on." Then seeing the question in Ed's eyes, he continued, "I can't tell you why. But, well—look here! Do you

believe I'd warn you like I'm doing if I didn't know what I was talking about?"

"No," Ed stated, honestly.

"All right then. Don't go near the place. If you knew what I know you wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole."

"But it's the only job I can get. It sounded mighty good to me after these last weeks. What's wrong with it?"

Benson, unreasonably as Ed thought, seemed nettled by his persistence.

"I can't tell you what's wrong with it," he said. "All I can tell you is to lay off it. That's my advice and you can take it or leave it. I'm not going to sit here and stage a dang-fool argument when you wouldn't savvy what I was talking about. I know that Totem Creek layout and you don't. You're headed for trouble if you go there—and don't you forget it." Then, as if he had said more than he intended to, Benson left money for his coffee on the counter and went out.

As the veteran started away with his vigorous, but slightly lurching gait, Ed wanted to go after him and argue this thing out. But what was there to argue about? Although he credited Benson with honest intentions, his refusal to give reasons had annoyed Ed.

"Sounded more like what y'might call an order than a friendly tip," Ed mused as he finished his meal. "Can't expect me to chuck over the only job

in sight just on his say-so. Anyhow, a fella's got to eat, doesn't he?" he added, and Derry's impatient whine from the doorway seemed a vigorous agreement.

When he left the "Big Eats" Ed carried a generous supply of scraps wrapped in a newspaper. The prospect of a meal delighted Derry, who pranced and cavorted in front of his master most of the way back to the room. Then when he had spread the paper on the floor, Ed drew the old chair to the window, placed his heels on the sill and studied what Benson had said from every possible angle.

The hour he spent in dwelling on it got him nowhere. "How can I tell what he was driving at?" Ed ask himself. "Totem Creek might be bad medicine for some people and not for me. All the Bensons in the world mightn't like it and I might, so there we are." Perhaps, after all, Benson spoke that way because the place was lonely, isolated. Even Mr. Allan had warned him about that. But supposing it was an unpleasant job, Ed felt he had to take it. Aside from the fact that the prospect had attracted him, he was cornered and the place at Totem Creek offered him his only way out.

"If we'd followed all the advice that's been handed us, we wouldn't have got very far. We'd have missed some bad times, all right, but we'd have missed some good times too, wouldn't we, old-timer?" he asked Derry, who had finished every

morsel of his meal and now sat looking up with a "what-next?" twinkle in his brown eyes.

That evening Ed took Derry and strolled the streets for two hours, expecting to meet Benson. From something which had been said that afternoon, Ed was sure the veteran was living near by. He wanted to talk with him. And though Benson had said positively he would make no further disclosures, Ed hoped that a talk might give him at least a hint why he should avoid Totem Creek.

"You scout round a bit," he told the Airedale. "I know you're sort of looking for that Bo dog. I'll keep my eye on you. If you cross his trail mebbe we'll locate them."

But by the time the street lights were on Ed had abandoned hope of meeting Benson. Finally he stopped moving about and stood on the corner of the street leading to the "Big Eats." Benson had said he often took his meals there. The mechanical piano in a place of amusement across the street blared and banged an unvaried program of jazz. The sound of laughter and the clink of balls came from the pool room behind him. Men came and went, but among them was no one who limped and who was followed by a small wire-haired terrier.

"Begins to seem like he's keeping out of my way on purpose," Ed concluded. "Come on, Derry, we might's well go back to the room."

Ed turned in early that night. The active, straightforward life to which he had been bred had

taught him the uselessness of worry. To do an honest day's work, to tackle any problem to the best of your ability and, when you had done that, not to trouble yourself with thoughts of what might or might not happen; this had become a habit with him. So now, instead of disturbing himself with doubts, he put Benson's warning out of his mind, turned out the light and, with Derry curled up beside the bed, went promptly to sleep. Next morning when he presented himself at the lawyer's office at ten o'clock, Benson's words had in no way lessened the enthusiasm with which he received his final instructions from the clerk.

"You are to proceed to Salmon Point, the trading post which Mr. Allan mentioned," the clerk informed him. "From there you'll have to make your own arrangements for reaching Totem Creek. There's a northbound steamer clearing tonight."

"I'll take her," Ed stated.

"Good. Here's a check—one hundred dollars for expense money, outfitting and so on. Sign this receipt."

When Ed had done so, he was given a legal looking letter addressed to "Whom It May Concern." It stated that the bearer, E. Sibley, was sole agent for the owners of the Totem Creek tract. It described the boundaries of the property as they were recorded in the land office at the Vancouver court house, and stated that said bearer was fully empowered to protect the interests of the owners.

"Now come along with that check while I identify you," the clerk stated. Fifteen minutes later the clerk shook hands with him at the doors of the bank and returned to the office while Ed, his money safely tucked in his pocket, started back for the water front to get Derry.

Outfitting for an indefinite stay in the wilds was not the involved matter for Ed Sibley that it would have been for most other people. During his roving life in the north he had been used to moving from place to place with all he owned wrapped in a tarpaulin and lashed to his Yukon packboard. He had come down to Vancouver in much the same way that he would have headed into some unsettled valley of the Twin Forks country.

"We'll get what grub we need at that Salmon Point place," he told Derry as they left the rooming house. "By that time we'll have some idea of the sort of country we're headed for and we'll know better what to take in. Main thing now is to get the old rifle and things out of that pawn shop."

As they moved up the street, Derry trotted purposefully in the lead. He had by no means forgotten his acquaintance of yesterday, and though Ed had taken care to lock the window, during his absence Derry had posted himself on lookout there in the hope of seeing the little terrier. It was from that window he had seen Bo first and he might see him from it again. A fellow never knew his luck.

But if Derry expected to meet Bo that morning,

he was disappointed. When they had returned from the pawn shop with the rifle and Ed's fly rod, Ed took Derry part way up town to Green and Dobson's, a large sporting goods store before whose show windows he had often stood absorbed during his weeks of idleness in the city. Now he entered, with Derry at his heels, and halted before the counter where fishing tackle was offered for sale.

After he had bought several stout trolling lines and an assortment of cod hooks, Ed asked to see some salmon lures. The salesman immediately produced a tray of spinners, wobblers and a number of gaudy contrivances of painted wood, and began to extol the merits of each. The impression that he tried to give was that, without at least one of every lure on the tray, it would be useless to try and catch a salmon. He seemed to imply that salmon were particularly wily fish, that they were endowed with great shrewdness, and that it was absurd to expect one even to look at a lure costing less than half a dollar. And though he did not say so, his talk hinted that even among lures of the same kind, the real aristocrats among the salmon much preferred to be hooked by tackle purchased from the exclusive Green and Dobson. He looked up from the tray to find Ed grinning with friendly protest.

"Guess you got me wrong," Ed said. "I'm not an angler—only a plain fisherman, and most of

the time a pan fisherman at that. I just wanted one or two spoons that would catch me a salmon if the salmon were biting. I don't aim to hypnotize 'em or anything."

The young salesman took Ed's cajolery in good part.

"I guess what you want is one of the old reliables. These here are the latest spring styles. Fact is," he added, confidentially, "a lot of this stuff is made to catch the eye of the sportsman, not the fish. I know, I do a lot of fishing myself. But business is business. You know how it is."

"Sure," Ed agreed. The salesman's good nature gave him confidence and after he had bought two spoons of proven worth Ed did something which very, very few persons had ever had the courage to attempt in the impressive store of Green and Dobson. In the little Comet Garage at Twin Forks he had learned how to shape spinners out of metal, and now he said he wanted to take a supply of sheet brass or copper up the coast with him.

It was evident by the salesman's face that Ed's request was unusual, but he was a regular fisherman, and the bonds of the brotherhood stood the strain.

"Might be able to manage it," he ventured. "Let's go upstairs to the workshops and see what we can find."

As soon as they were upstairs Ed saw the part

of Green and Dobson's which was to be one of the few pleasant and lasting memories of his stay in Vancouver. It was the part of the store where things were not just offered for sale, but where they were made. It was a sight which would interest any sportsman. But to Ed, who, by both choice and necessity, had been used to making a good part of his sporting equipment with his own hands, it was a never-to-be-forgotten experience. Even Derry seemed to feel more at home in the workmanlike untidiness of the little shop.

"Ever see trout flies being tied?" the salesman asked, indicating several girls at work at a long table at one of the front windows.

"Tie most of my own," Ed answered. "But I'd like to see experts doing it."

Going to the table he noted how nimbly the fingers of these workers bound feather tufts to the hooks and fastened them in place with fine silk thread. He even saw one of the girls making a dry fly so small it was not much longer than the width of a split pea. "She's one of the best workers on this continent," the salesman confided as they moved away.

At the other end of the shop two gunsmiths were working and when one of them, to test a gun butt he was shaping, raised it to his shoulder, Derry made for him like a shot.

The salesman smiled but when Derry looked sharply at the ceiling and along the walls for the

grouse he felt sure must be about to fly, even the elderly gunsmith laughed.

A few minutes later, when he and Derry left the store, Ed's pocket was filled with enough odd pieces of brass, copper and nickel plated metal to keep him in salmon and cod lures for years.

The rest of the day was filled with pleasant activity. Ed rolled his few belongings in his blankets, lashed them to the packboard and took it to the steamer wharf where he checked it until sailing time that night.

When he started for the "Big Eats" to get a belated supper for himself and Derry he found himself hoping against hope that he might yet find Benson before leaving the city. He even asked the waiter about him.

"Wears a returned soldier button and walks with a bit of a limp," Ed explained. "Always has a wire-haired terrier with him. Thought you might have noticed. He eats here regular."

"Can't say I spotted him," the waiter replied thoughtfully. "Such a raft of fellers eat here—you know how it is."

"Sure. Just thought I'd ask." Ed was plainly disappointed.

Two hours later he and Derry boarded the steamer. It was a black, starless night. The wharves stretched out like smirched fingers from the lumpy fist of the city. The warm southwest wind brought in a scent of the unsullied sea. And as Ed leaned on

the rail and watched the lights of Vancouver go down into the night he found himself regretting more than ever that he had not been able to explain things to the crippled soldier whose warning he was refusing to heed.

WHEN the lights of the city were only a reflection against the under side of the clouds, Ed buckled on Derry's collar, fastened a leash to it and led him below. When they came aboard, the purser had told Ed that no dogs were allowed on deck or in the cabins, and had instructed him to tie the Aire-dale up somewhere on the cargo deck.

The collar and leash let Derry know what was in store for him. Very reluctantly he followed Ed below and when he was tied in an out of the way corner of the deck where the lighter pieces of freight were stored, he viewed his surroundings with pessimistic eyes. What a place for a dog! Up above he could take luxurious sniffs of the night air and perhaps in the morning there would be sea gulls to bark at. But this stuffy hole—!

"See you in the morning, son," Ed told him. "Won't be long. We should be ashore by tomorrow noon. Just you curl up on these sacks and forget your troubles."

Derry looked at the bed his master was making for him. Disdainfully he sniffed the heap of burlap. Then he lifted his head quickly and looked about the poorly lighted hold with a bright and knowing eye. His nose had told him something which in a flash had altered the prospects of the whole voyage.

Instead of being bored to death, here was hope of entertainment. He sniffed the sacks again to make quite sure. Yessir! No doubt about it. There had been rats on those sacks that very evening!

Derry sat erect and his agitated tail stub rustled the sacking as he watched Ed start to mount the companionway. His chin was drawn well in against his tan chest, the tips of his ears fell pertly forward as he glanced toward his master with a look of amused superiority.

“Not a bad sort, old Ed,” he seemed to be thinking. “If only I could teach him to use his nose. The old man misses loads of fun by not sniffing. If I’ve tried once, I’ve tried a thousand times to show him how it’s done. He’s bright enough in other ways too. I don’t understand it.” Then as if deciding there was nothing he could do about Ed’s stupidity, Derry stood up and began to explore the sacks more thoroughly.

When he had pawed them apart, thus scattering the bed which Ed had carefully made for him, he was delighted. Why, if a dog was to believe his nose this ship was literally seething with rats. They were the strongest, and most whiffy rats he had ever scented. He lunged to the full length of the leash and sniffed the deck. His tail waggled more rapidly. Didn’t it just show that a fellow never knew his luck?

He stood and gave himself up to serious thought. Something simply must be done about this. He

gave his leash an exasperated yank. If only he could get free of this stupid thing he'd show these long-tailed blighters who was boss around here.

Just then a door in the far bulkhead opened and a deckhand started to cross the dimly lighted space. Derry halted him with a curt yip.

"Hold on there! I need you," his bark said.

The deckhand gave him an indifferent glance. Derry glared back at him as if saying that he'd better not get so snooty about it and that it was a jolly good thing there was some one in this ship with gumption enough to know what should be done with these hordes of rats. He barked again. "Burph! Come over here. I need you."

This was plain enough for even the deckhand to understand. He crossed the hold and discovered the Airedale.

"Stow it, fella," he ordered.

Derry pranced with impatience. As if any self-respecting terrier could stow it in a ship full of rats. Why, it was enough to make the blood of a mild mannered spaniel boil. Even a Pekinese couldn't be snobbish in such a den of rascals. He lurched against the leash and looked up to tell the man to unfasten it.

"What a hope!" the deckhand told him. "Chief Officer'd throw a fit if he found you loose in here." Then he turned his back on Derry and started to go out.

Derry went wild with exasperation. He launched

barks, yaps and a howl or two after the departing figure. He even condescended to whine pleadingly. Of all the thick skulled—! But just then the door opened and a second man came in. The new arrival was a small man. His begrimed sleeveless shirt and the sweat cloth around his neck identified him as a stoker. He had just come up from the fire hold for a “breather.”

“ ‘Ello, ‘ello! ‘oo’ ave we ‘ere,” he began, then seeing Derry he turned to the deckhand and inquired what all the “song and dance” was about.

“Dunno. He started soon’s I came in. Looks like he wants somebody to cast off that leash.”

The cockney came closer and looked down at the prancing terrier. As if to explain matters, Derry sniffed the sacks, glanced sharply to right and left, spun round as if to surprise a rat behind him, then looked expectantly up at the stoker.

“Lumme! ‘E’s seen a rat.”

The big deckhand was skeptical. He had little understanding of dogs and to him this seemed like pure guessing.

“How you figger he seen a rat?” he asked. He was ready to debate the point with the little stoker.

“Gor! Look at ‘im.”

“Can’t tell that by lookin’ can yuh?”

“Can a duck swim? If I ‘ad a dollar for every time I’ve ‘unted rats wiv a terrier I wouldn’t call the King me uncle, so I wouldn’t. Grand sport, it was, round the wharves of Tidal Basin of a Satur-

day awfternoon. 'Ere. Me and 'im's going to 'ave a go at this," he added as he started to untie the leash.

"You're askin' for it, you are. Anyhow, he ain't your dog."

"'Aven't I just told you he saw a rat?" the stoker demanded. The deckhand's unreasonable-ness annoyed him. Judged by the cockney's code, there was only one thing to do if you saw a dog who wanted to hunt rats—and that was to turn the dog loose and let him hunt. Derry agreed most heartily in this opinion. The instant he was loose he shot an understanding glance at his liberator and darted toward the nearest pile of boxes.

The deckhand pushed back his cap and scratched his head perplexedly.

"Dog-gone, you're right," he admitted as he watched the eager terrier. "I see that now."

"An' you ain't seen the 'arf of it yet. Wait till he gets a good hot scent of the blighters." The stoker jerked his thumb meaningly at the door in the forward bulkhead. "Go slip the bolt to. The three of us can 'ave some fun 'ere if some ruddy officer don't bother us. Shake a leg. I'll shift these cases so the lad can 'ave a real go at it."

When the deckhand returned from bolting the door Derry had his head jammed between two heavy boxes and was snorting with wild rapture at the scent which came to him. The stoker was tugging vainly at one of the boxes.

“ ’E’s got one cornered,” he panted. “Lend a hand wiv this blarsted case.”

The deckhand, beginning to catch the spirit of the game, put his great arms around the heavy case, bent his knees and heaved the box out of the way. Derry was into the opening like a shot. Suddenly he backed out, scampered around the pile and began clawing at the far side of the pile. Then doubling on his tracks he made for the next pile of freight.

“Come on, lads,” he yapped. “Heave these bags out of my way. I’ll give him what-for yet.”

“ ’E knows,” the stoker chuckled in huge delight. “Come on, matie.” The deckhand, thoroughly roused, was the first to begin shifting the pile. Even an emergency order to discharge cargo could not have made him attack the pile so vigorously.

“Son of a gun,” he grinned. “You bet he knows.”

As they began tearing the pile apart, Derry acted like a mad thing. He was underfoot, then on the very sack they were moving, then with his head wedged into the next crevice. From time to time he favored his two assistants with a delighted glance. Once he barked loudly to cheer them on. But the stoker’s guarded “Stow it!” warned him that this was a private rat hunt and the less noise the better.

The pile had been reduced to half its size when Derry sprang back with an exasperated yelp and

raced across the ship to the far side. The stoker's trained eye told him that this time the Airedale had actually sighted the rat and that it had abandoned its second hiding place.

"Blow me!" he puffed. He ran after Derry and tried to seize his collar. "Come on. We'll find one that ain't so slippery."

"What's the big idea?" the deckhand demanded.

"We'll try some place else. That blinkin' rat won't corner. Look what 'e made us do!" and he pointed to the side of the hold they had just left. It was a sight which would have driven any boatswain into a towering rage. Boxes, cases, crates, sacks and odd parcels of other freight strewn the deck. It seemed unbelievable that two men could have moved all that in so short a time. And it would have been next to impossible for any but a pair whose blood had been infected with Derry's passion for rats. His was the most contagious enthusiasm either of them had encountered in years.

But the deckhand, though slow in starting, was all for seeing this business through.

"Give us the slip, eh? We'll corner him if I got to drag the whole ruddy ship apart. Let's go," and he advanced on the rows of cement barrels among which Derry told them the rat must be hiding.

"Stout fellow! stout fellow!" Derry's yelp meant. "I knew you'd stick with the bunch." The fact that the stoker was for seeking easier hunting grounds and that he alone made up the "bunch"

did not seem a bit absurd to Derry. The stoker read the challenge in the terrier's yelp.

"Righto, matie," he panted, feeling that his reputation as a loyal brother of the rat hunting fraternity was being questioned.

Derry's two henchmen had moved all the first row of heavy barrels and were half way down the second, when the deckhand chanced to look behind him. Instantly he twisted his big mouth sideways and in a terse whisper, advised the stoker to "pipe down!" The stoker, out of breath and with the sting of sweat in his eyes, looked toward the door in the after bulkhead and saw the second officer glaring at them. A sudden ominous silence fell upon the hold. Derry, with his head and shoulders wedged between two barrels, saw nothing, but both the men knew they were "for it." The stoker gave his grimy sweatcloth an embarrassed twitch. The deckhand, after his terse warning, kept right on moving the barrels. He was not a quick thinker and in his confusion there seemed nothing better to do.

"Steady there!" the officer roared. "What in the blue blank blazes are you trying to celebrate?"

The deckhand, his huge arms hanging limp and awkward, merely gulped.

"Y'see, sir," the stoker began. He tried to appear sweetly reasonable. The attempt was a sorry failure.

"And what do you mean by that—and that?"

the officer bellowed, pointing to the disordered piles on the opposite side of the hold.

“Well, y’see sir,” the stoker began again. He wasn’t a bit hopeful of evading the officer’s ire but he had to say something. “It’s like this here, sir,” he began again when Derry, at last aware of something gone amiss, backed out of his hole and looked at the grizzled, blue jacketed figure near the after door.

Panting from his exertions and with his tongue lolling from his grinning mouth, Derry eyed the newcomer with delight. The more the merrier in a rat hunt. In an effort to get the officer into the swing of the game Derry dashed at him, barked and tried to lead him to the cement barrels.

“What’s this dog doing loose?” the officer snapped.

“Ratting, sir,” the stoker explained, shame-facedly.

But Derry felt no embarrassment. So far as he knew, rat hunting was nothing to apologize for. He looked up at the officer and if he had been engaged in stopping a leak in the ship’s side he could not have seemed more satisfied with his industry.

“Huh!” the officer grunted scornfully. “Well, turn to, the pair of ye and get that freight ship-shape.”

“Aye aye sir,” the two men mumbled. The “second” was the driver of the ship and in their eager-

ness to appease his wrath they turned to with a will.

Derry stood eyeing the officer quizzically. He wagged his tail in invitation, went back, then trotted expectantly toward the cement barrels. The officer appeared not to notice him.

“Burph!” Derry’s polite effort to attract the man’s attention seemed to have little effect. Derry was plainly puzzled. Still grinning he sat down in the shadow of a stanchion and studied this unresponsive human. A man who wouldn’t join in a rat hunt was a curiosity. Then he got up, walked deliberately to a bundle of iron pipes and sniffed expectantly at their ends. The officer regarded him with chilling indifference.

Derry seemed to have forgotten him, but as he trotted purposefully to the other end of the heap, he took care to note from the corner of his eyes, that he had at last caught the officer’s attention. Arriving at the ends of the pipes, he tested several and then choosing one, he snorted into it. His enthusiasm carried conviction. The officer walked slowly toward him. Derry snorted more loudly. The officer rattled the pipe with his foot.

“Good egg,” Derry barked, his eyes snapping. No doubt about it, this cool fish was warming up. The officer moved the pipe again and this time Derry gave a most convincing imitation of a dog who had not only smelled, but seen a rat. He hurled

himself at the heap, clawing it vainly, urging the officer to lend a hand before the rat found cover. Completely taken in by the ruse, the officer bent over and shook the bundle to dislodge the rat he supposed to be hiding there, and during the clang and rattle which followed Derry scrambled over the pile and dashed madly back to the cement barrels.

“He gave us the slip that time, mister, but we got him where we want him now,” his ringing barks said.

The officer lost no time in following him. There was a purposeful gleam in his hard eyes as he seized a deck broom and prodded and rattled it among the barrels. Derry crowded between the man’s legs quivering with anticipation. Then he drew back and looked up to let the man know they must do something more drastic.

“You don’t know this rat like I do, brother,” he hinted. “But we can nail him if we move these barrels.”

At that very instant the officer arrived at the same conclusion. Derry’s infectious enthusiasm had been too much for his reserve and for the moment he found himself wanting nothing so much in the world as to see the terrier get that rat. Let a rat make a fool out of him? Not by a jugful. Tearing off his jacket he pulled up his cuffs and attacked the ranks of heavy barrels. Derry shrilled his delight.

“We’ll get him yet,” the officer grunted. He was too absorbed to notice the two men he had rebuked for this very thing only a few minutes before. And for their own good, it was well that he did not notice. Both stoker and deckhand were in the throes of hilarious mirth. Step by step they had watched with suppressed delight while Derry led the officer on. It was a joke which would give both stokehold and forecastle something to chuckle about for days.

Suddenly the officer bawled an urgent command to them. “Lend a hand here, men,” he shouted.

“It’s right in here somewhere,” he told them when they ran to obey. “Come on, put your backs into it.”

As barrel after barrel was moved back, Derry was here, there, everywhere, urging them on, putting vim and zest into the game. And when finally the last barrel was moved and no rat appeared, he seemed more bewildered than any of them. Then as if a bright idea had occurred to him, he went to a knothole in the sheeting of the ship’s side and sniffed. His disappointed manner conveyed the belief that the rat had escaped through the hole and had climbed down one of the ribs between the sheeting and the ship’s outer planking.

The officer, still puffing, was buttoning his jacket when he turned to his two fellow huntsmen. Ruefully they were looking at the disorder caused by the hunt.

“No use piling that stuff up again,” the officer said. “Just sort it out a bit. Most of it goes off in the morning anyhow.”

“Not too blinkin’ dusty, ’e ain’t,” the stoker chuckled when their superior had gone. “I got an idear the dog made up that last part—about a rat in them pipes. Sort of come-on game, that was.”

“How could he?” the deckhand asked.

“Oh, ’e could orlright. You don’t know them terriers like I do,” the stoker stated as he replaced the leash.

“And you don’t know humans like I do,” Derry might have said. “What would you think if I told you I never found a scent of a rat after I got off these sacks?” As they departed he dropped contentedly to what remained of the bed which Ed had made for him. It had been a good game anyway, and it was a poor sort of dog who couldn’t imagine a rat when a night’s sport depended on it.

SALMON POINT was much like a score of other trading and fishing centers along the British Columbia seaboard. That great Pacific province has, including its islands and fiords, seventy thousand miles of coast line. And at strategic points along it such centers as Salmon Point grow up, only to sink into ruin when the fishing grounds give out or when loggers and settlers move on to more promising areas. But on the noon of that June day when Ed Sibley, with all his worldly possessions on his back and his dog at his side, came down the gangplank, he thought that Salmon Point was one of the most picturesque and interesting places he had ever seen.

The rugged upper coast was new country to Ed Sibley. Except for its few settlements, it has remained unaltered since the days of early exploration; since the days of the Spanish navigators, Quadra, Don Valdez, Don Galiano, and General Alva; since Captain Cook first sighted it in 1777, and the staunch hearted Mackenzie of the North West company—the first white man to cross the Rockies to the Pacific—looked out across it in 1793. Brooding, not friendly, not vindictive, but serenely indifferent to the little races of men who come and

go but can never conquer it, the upper coast is much the same today as when the Indians held it as their own.

All that morning Ed had been on deck. He had looked shoreward, seeing things which only one much practiced in foot travel through trailless mountain country would notice. He had marked a few of the points in which it differed from his own Twin Forks country. It all interested him, beckoned to him, challenged him, and as he started along the wharf toward the unpainted buildings of the water front he felt that once again he was on the threshold of adventure.

Close to the approach of the wharf stood a gaunt, box-like building across whose front was a sign, "Salmon Point Trading Company." Ed entered it, eased his bulky pack to the floor and waited for some one to appear from behind the board partition at the rear, beyond which he could hear voices. Besides groceries and drygoods, Ed noted the wide range of fishermen's supplies on display. Gum boots, slickers, trolling gear, gas engine fittings, were ranged along the nearer shelves. In front of the counter he saw even such things as galley stoves and an assortment of propeller blades. Yet in spite of its different character, the place reminded him of stores in the northern interior of the province. Both spoke of the great out-of-doors, and the very goods in both suggested that many an adventurous undertaking had begun with the out-

fitting done there. Ed turned to see a man coming behind the counter toward him.

"Good day," Ed began. "Thought mebbe you could tell me how a fella can get to Totem Crick. Been told there isn't a reg'lar boat."

"Nope. Totem Creek, eh?" the man commented thoughtfully. "Hold on a minute. Hey, Bill," he called to the man back of the partition. "Take a look out and see if Strowli's gas boat's at the float yet. What say? Pulled out. You missed a good chance there," he told Ed. "Mister Strowli's the big mogul up at a settlement they call Cedar Cove. That's just north of Totem Creek. He'd give you a lift."

"Tough luck."

"Yeh. I don't know of anybody else heading that way. None of the fishing boats go that far up so early in the season. You might go down to the float and ask just to make sure."

"Thanks. Be all right to leave my pack here?"

"Leave the dog if you like," the man said affably. "Only looks to me he's rarin' to go," he added with a glance at the prancing Airedale.

The tide was out, and as Ed and Derry went down the steep pitch of the runway leading to the float below the store, Ed examined the twenty or thirty gas boats moored there. All the fishing boats were in trolling rig, their four or more long cedar poles upright against the one short mast on each. That morning from the deck of the steamer, Ed

had seen similar craft at work. Then the poles, hinged to the foot of the mast, were lowered at varying angles so that as the boats moved with engines throttled down, their trolling lines covered a strip of water fifty or sixty feet wide. Some of the lines were surface lines, others were heavily weighted so that the trolling baits went deep. Little bells on the poles were rigged so that whenever one of the big spring salmon was hooked it rang to call the fisherman out of the cabin.

“Some city sportsmen pay big money for sea fishing like that,” Ed thought, “and here are these birds doing it for a living. But I guess in bad weather it isn’t as soft a job as a fella’d think.”

There were other boats moored there as well. Fat nosed craft with low cabins and gear of various kinds on their decks astern, boats belonging to hand loggers or work boats of other sorts. Some were dingy with old auto tires for fenders, others shipshape and trim in new paint. On one a man in faded overalls and a saggy woolen undershirt was sousing his head in a canvas bucket on the after deck while his dinner sizzled in the frying pan on the little galley stove just inside the cabin.

Ed waited until the man dried his chest, neck and face vigorously, tossed the towel onto the bunk inside and was emptying the bucket. Then catching his eye, Ed asked if by any chance he was headed as far as Totem Creek within the next few days.

The man studied Ed with an unfriendly eye for

a second and then shook his head and, deliberately turning his back on his questioner, went into the cabin.

As Ed turned away he saw a man looking at him from the deck of a troller farther along the line of boats. After the rebuff he had just received he hesitated about approaching him, but the fisherman lifted a hand in greeting.

"Looking for somebody?" he asked when Ed came alongside the troller.

"Just scouting round for a lift far's Totem Crick," Ed stated. "Chances don't seem to be good," he added with a glance at the work boat.

"Travellin' companions aren't welcome in some lines of business," the fisherman observed significantly. "That's Black Geary. Heard of him?"

"Nope."

"Guess you don't read the police news. Making for Totem Creek, are you? Don't think there's a chance of a lift. It's sixty miles to Totem. No trollers work that far up. You aim to be there long?"

"Quite a time," Ed told him.

The man reflected a moment.

"Lookit. I'm not trying to sell you a pup or anything, but if I was staying away off there I'd have a boat of my own. You could come and go as you like. I know where you could pick up a good little outfit, cheap."

Ed did some quick thinking. He would have to come here for supplies every month or so and

without a boat he would always be dependent on some one to give him a lift. He had expense money enough to cover the cost of a small secondhand boat, and, apart from his own convenience, there might be times when a boat to bring him to Salmon Point might be urgently needed. In case of trouble on the tract he was to guard, he must come here for police assistance. Mr. Allan had told him that.

“This boat you’re talking about—how much would it run me into?” he asked.

“I tell you what. Come along and we’ll have a look at her. A side-kick of mine owns her and he told me to sell for not less’n fifty dollars. That’s dirt cheap. He’s got a bigger boat or she’d not be on the market at all.”

The fisherman joined Ed on the float and, with Derry trotting briskly ahead, they mounted the bank and set out along a skid road toward a small cove several hundred yards east of the store. As they walked it was obvious that the fisherman was not averse to knowing more of Ed’s reason for going into the Totem Creek district.

“It’s Totem Creek you’re headed for, isn’t it?” he asked after he saw that only a direct question would bring him the information he wanted. “Sure it isn’t Beaver Cove? They lie close alongside each other, y’know.”

“It’s Totem Creek all right,” Ed told him. He wondered why the man was so eager to know this.

“I just thought mebbe you’d been kidded into

joining up with that settlement in at the Cove," the fisherman explained. "Some settlement, that."

"How you mean?"

"You'll be near enough to find out," the other stated evasively. He seemed genuinely relieved at learning Ed had not been induced to take up land there.

Ed was far from satisfied with this cryptic statement. He thought of Benson's warning. He would have liked to have asked for explanations, but it was plain that the fisherman was averse to saying more, and Ed had lived long enough on the frontier to know that when a man did not want to talk it didn't pay to urge him.

They had arrived at the cove and the fisherman led the way toward a shake shelter which had been built above the drift logs marking the high tide line.

"Here she is," he said.

Ed saw a sixteen-foot craft, clinker built and beamy as a lifeboat. "Nothing fancy but she's staunch and she'll ride most any sea you'll get hereabouts. Lend a hand and we'll slip her into the chuck."

Although Ed was a new hand on the coast, he was rightly proud of his knowledge of small boats. Ever since he had been big enough to handle paddle, oar and canoe pole, he had freighted and travelled on the north country lakes and rivers. Canoes, poling boats, Indian dugouts and skiffs, these he

knew and understood. And although this boat would have been awkward on a fast river, and though its keel would have made it unsuited for use on riffles and shallows, he thought that in a sea it should handle excellently.

Moreover Ed was delighted to find that the boat was fitted with a sail. He helped the fisherman step the mast into the block which was placed immediately aft of the locker in the bow. The sail was thrown loosely across the thwarts, and when they had put the oars and rudder aboard, they called Derry and pushed out into the cove.

“Hoist away and I’ll show you how she handles,” the man stated. He shipped the oars and rowed through the gap toward the open water where the afternoon westerly was already flecking the blue surface of the sea with white. When they were outside he leaned over the square stern, shipped the rudder and close hauled the sheet which Ed passed him. The sail began to haul and as they gathered way tinkling little voices broke into song under her stem.

They were well clear of the point now and as the unbroken wind found them, Ed, grinning with delight, shifted to windward on the forward thwart.

“Walking right along,” he exclaimed. Derry, leaning perilously over the side, whined as he gazed longingly at a passing gull.

“Betcha. You come and handle her now.” They

changed places and as Ed eased the sheet and ran off a few points the fisherman told him more about the boat.

“To come about good, that mast should be stepped a few inches farther aft,” he explained. “But except for a few blows late on, the winds here are either southwest or southeast. There’s mostly too strong a tide running in these inlets to do much beating. Mostly you run, and for running you don’t want a rig that’ll come about every time you take your hand off the tiller. This way you can move about and she’ll hold her course. Makes it good for one man, trolling. What you think of her?”

“Pretty good,” Ed stated. He had seen enough to know that the boat was a find for fifty dollars. In spite of the fact that she had been hauled up drying on the logs for months, the boat had taken only a few spoonfuls of water. A few days afloat and she would take up and be as dry as a chip. A stronger puff caught them and, easing the sheet, Ed let her run before it. Then and there he knew the boat was as good as his.

“Yep, she’s pretty good,” the fisherman agreed. He wasn’t much of a man for sales talk. Nor for that matter, was Ed. Both he and his new acquaintance belonged to that world where high pressure methods were little known and where a man’s likes and dislikes were considered so strictly personal that such methods would only arouse a healthy and outspoken ire. If a man had something to sell,

he said so; if a man wanted something he went to the place where it could be bought. Like most of his kind, Ed was strongly individual. He didn't buy things because other youths he knew had them. Relying on his own judgment had become a habit with him in the woods. And had the fisherman urged him he would have thought there must be something wrong with the boat.

"I'll take her for fifty dollars," Ed stated after a long pause.

"Jake. You're getting a real boat for the money. Might as well head back now," the fisherman said.

Ed brought her about and as they started back it occurred to him that they had everything belonging to the boat aboard and that therefore there was no need to go back to the cove at all. "Be all right if I tie up at the float?" he asked. "We can square things up there. Then I'll get my outfit and make a start this afternoon. Should get ten miles or so on my way before sundown anyhow."

"Good idea. Before we leave you remind me to find you a tide table. That's something everybody needs hereabouts."

When Ed had brought his new craft alongside the float, they went to the cabin of the fishing boat where Ed handed over the fifty dollars and where the fisherman, after rummaging in a locker, found a spare copy of the tide tables for the year.

"How do these things work?" Ed asked. "Looks just like so many columns of figures to me."

“Lemme show you. Here’s the tables for this part of the coast. Here’s the month. Now look here.”

Ed looked. What he saw was an array of figures and letters like the following:

MAY							
Date	Day	Time H’t		Time H’t		Time H’t	
		H. M. Ft.		H. M. Ft.		H. M. Ft.	
1	Thurs.	1:11	9.1	5:43	12.0	13:24	0.1 20:59 12.7

These columns were continued for every day of the month and every month of the year.

“All right now,” the other went on. “H. M. means hours and minutes, and Ft. is the height above zero.”

“But where do they get the zero?” Ed wanted to know.

“The gover’mment lads that make the tables say what’s zero. They keep the readings for a lot of years and then sort of strike an average, I guess. Anyhow, not many tides a year go below zero. You see there’s two high and two low tides every twenty-four hours. In summer low tide’s in the daytime, in winter mostly at night. So you just turn up the month and the day, run along the line you want and you see where you stand. Mostly tides change about an hour each day.”

“I’m beginning to savvy.”

“Sure. Main thing to watch is not to try bucking

the tides more'n you have to. Come down the inlet on a falling tide and go back on a flood. There's a narrows up here about twenty miles. Boiling Pass they call it. Don't tackle that at any time but slack water.

"Slack water is at any of the four times printed here, is it?"

"Sure. And if you figger doing much fishing it's best to work on a rising tide, just after the ebb. Got to watch all these things. The old salt chuck isn't like a lake. She don't stay put. Moving all the time, specially round a broken coast like this. More like a big river than the ocean."

The fisherman wanted him to stay for "a bite and a mug up," but Ed was eager to get started. And so after he had spent half an hour buying supplies and tools at the store, and had stowed them and his outfit in the boat, he ordered Derry aboard and with a "so long" to the fisherman cast off and hoisted sail. As he looked back he could see Black Geary standing on the after deck of his gas boat watching him. The fisherman waved and then, with a following wind, the sailboat slipped past the rocky point and Ed and Derry were headed for their new home sixty miles up the inlet.

At last, after weeks of civilization, they were entering the wilderness again. And for Derry it was a homecoming as delightfully exciting as any he had ever known. After a cautious leap or two, he scrambled onto the decking in the bow, and,

partly sheltered from the wind by the sail, he posted himself there as lookout. Now and then he would look back at Ed as if to let him know that all was clear, but most of the time his gaze was fixed far ahead. Several hundred yards away a flock of old squaw ducks rested on the moving surface of the inlet and Derry shifted forward until his front paws were in danger of slipping off the stem post. He was trying to further increase this slight gain by leaning as far forward as he dared, when Ed called for him to "keep his shirt on."

"You'll be over the side in a minute, mister," he chuckled. Derry gave him a grieved look and edged back to the mast.

They made camp at sundown near where a mountain stream came brawling across the gravel beach to join the sea. The last warm puffs of the dying day breeze scarcely ruffled the blue water as Ed beached the boat. The tide was dropping. As he gathered driftwood for a fire Derry set off along the beach. A sandpiper toe-danced, ran and curt-sied on the gleaming shingle. Derry looked regretfully at it as it skimmed away. Then he trotted on to where he could see crows busy among the green boulders the tide was uncovering.

To the Airedale, these crows seemed to be playing a bewildering game. He sat down to watch, while first one and then another of the flock would tug a mussel loose from the rocks and fly straight into the air with it. There it would hover for a

second or two, then drop the shell and flap down to seize it eagerly again.

Derry did not understand that this was the way the northwestern crow cracks the mussel shells in order to get the food within. Sometimes when the shell did not break the first drop, a crow would soar higher than before and let it fall.

"Hey there," Derry barked, "what's the big idea?" One crow answered with a jeering "c-aaw."

The taunt was too much for Derry. He was off like a shot, scampering over the barnacle encrusted stones regardless of the likelihood of cutting his paws. Two of the flock, perched on large boulders, eyed him with bright, inquiring eyes.

But they were not left in doubt of the intention of this noisy invader, and when he charged among them they flapped up, circled over him and made impolite remarks. Then they formed into a straggling flock and wavered away up the inlet until at last the gray of the gathering twilight hid them. Derry walked soberly back to camp and found his supper ready.

After they had eaten he lay beside his master while the purple shadows in the draws of the inlet deepened into night. The sheen of the afterglow lay upon the water. Out in the dusk a loon yodeled. Only the faint sound of falling water from the creek course up the mountain side mingled with the crisping whisper of lazy wavelets on the shingle

beach. Cool air currents came down the mountain side. Ed built up the fire and watched the first stars appear. More and more stars shone like spangles on night's cloak, spangles which were stirred by the soundless winds of space. Ed rolled in his blankets and sighed happily. He and Derry were home again.

DERRY was the first to discover the ruins of the deserted Indian village when, late the following afternoon, after a splendid day's run, they rounded the point just south of Totem Creek.

Though dropping, the wind held enough to take the boat ahead at a rate of four or five miles an hour. Derry, still on lookout in the bow, saw the gray roofs above the green of alders and coast maples which had encroached upon the abandoned clearing. He turned and gave his master a significant look. Ed knew that such a glance always meant, "Here's something you'd better see." More than once on mountain or river Derry's sharp eyes had flashed that same arresting signal. So now, he stood up and looked toward the curving beach they were approaching.

"That's her," Ed said aloud. Rearing above the canopy of leaves before the houses, he could see the tops of several badly weathered totem poles. Knowing the tragic story of the tribe, they seemed to the white youth to reach up through the green like gnarled fingers clutching vainly at the splendors of a glorious past.

When he felt the boat being turned shoreward, Derry's tail stub thudded softly against the mast. The prospect of getting ashore delighted him after

the hours of inactivity in the boat, and the very instant the bow grated gently on the beach, he gathered his feet under him and sprang eagerly ashore. He was starting on a run for the edge of the woods, when Ed called him back.

"Guess you can stick around a minute or two longer, son," he told the Airedale. "We'll look the place over together."

Derry stood impatiently while Ed pulled up the heavy boat as far as he could, then ran out the long painter and made it fast to a snag among the driftwood. When this was done, Ed took his light ax from the pack and angled up the beach toward where the first of the old Indian dwellings could be seen through the fringe of green.

He was climbing over the drift logs when Derry, suddenly changing his mind about entering the woods, looked farther along the beach, barked sharply and started away on the run. Ed looked and saw a small rowboat drawn up on the gravel close to the mouth of the large creek which flowed into the head of the little bay.

After all he had been told about Totem Creek being such an isolated place, the discovery surprised him. When he reached the boat, beside which Derry stood waiting for him, Ed saw that the cod line coiled in the stern was still wet. A man's footprints led from the boat and up the beach toward the woods. The fact that the first footmark was within a yard of the receding tide line showed him

that the unknown visitor had landed less than half an hour ago.

As soon as he saw his master start up the beach in the direction the man had taken, Derry crowded ahead. On the larger stones near the logs it was impossible to follow the tracks by sight, but Derry's nose told him the way the stranger had gone. Usually in the woods, a chance meeting with a human was a pleasing matter, but the terrier was quick to sense that in this case it was not pleasure, but a cool, deliberate curiosity which made Ed start after the visitor.

The dog's sensitive nature told him, as plainly as words, that the stranger's presence in the old village had put his master on his guard. By that mysterious but sure instinct which united these two who had roved the wilds so much together, the Airedale knew that this meeting had not been arranged beforehand. In some subtle but unerring way he knew Ed's mind had become alert, wary. And in the erectness of his head and tail Derry disclosed a sudden guarded aggressiveness.

"Stay close," he heard Ed's quiet voice say. "We're not going to start throwing our weight 'round the very minute we land on the job. May be nothing off-color about this after all."

Derry looked back as if to give assurance that he would do nothing rash, and was surprised to see that his master had stopped. He saw him sit down on a log and, when Ed snapped his fingers,

Derry trotted reluctantly back and stood near. But Ed noticed that he turned and stared fixedly into the shadow beneath the sprawling boughs of the maples.

“You an’ me’ll just wait here till he comes out”; Derry heard Ed say. “Don’t look right to be trailing him. It’s a cinch he heard that bark you gave and chances are he’ll come out to see who we are. Leastways that’s what I’d do.”

But after ten minutes had passed Ed began to think that the stranger felt no curiosity about that sudden bark. That in itself seemed strange, for in a place like this it would be only natural to at least pass a word with anyone who chanced to come ashore. It was Derry who finally discovered the man, and what he saw by no means dispelled the suspicion which his master’s unconscious attitude had aroused.

As he stood close to Ed, staring toward the mottled shadow and sunlight of the tree line, Derry’s quick eyes caught the merest suggestion of movement. A slowly advancing body, its outline concealed by the foliage, caused one small patch of sunlight to change shape, disappear and then increase slowly to its former size. Very slowly, very deliberately, Derry’s head came down until it was thrust forward, in line with his black and tan shoulders. The tips of his lifted ears flattened and the merest suggestion of a growl came from between his tightly closed lips.

Some dogs would have shot forward, openly truculent, but since puppyhood Derry had been trained to not so much as bark at any human without ample provocation. Thus, his growl was not intended for the man at all but as a whispered warning to his master.

Ed turned, followed the direction of the dog's intent gaze, but could see nothing. Yet Derry's intentness, his rigid body and lowered head told him that something had moved in there among the trees. And the dog's unwavering attention made it plain that the unseen form was still there, concealed by the branches, moveless and watchful.

Ed hesitated only a moment, then he stood on the log and looked deliberately toward the maples. The hidden man could not help but see him and now if he did not show himself Ed felt there would be good grounds for suspecting him. But just then the boughs moved and a man stepped carelessly out into the sunlight.

He seemed surprised to see the youth and dog on the logs fifty feet or so in front of him, and as he came toward them Ed told Derry to "heel." The Airedale obeyed the whispered command but even when he had taken his place behind his master his watchful bearing did not change. Ed did not know, but he, Derry, knew that this man had been hidden there for several minutes, watching them, observing all their actions, before he showed himself. Any living thing which lurked in shadowy places

was a suspect according to the rough and ready code of terriers.

The stranger was of middle age, big and heavy set in a ponderous, slow moving sort of way. As he came from the edge of the trees Ed noted the high laced boots, riding breeches and brightly patterned woolen shirt, which to his experienced eye indicated a novice dressed for the woods rather than a genuine woodsman.

"Hello. Where in the world did you hail from?" the man asked with easy pleasantness. "Thought I had the whole place to myself. A bit early in the season for a camping trip isn't it?" As he finished speaking he laid on the log the short handled shovel he was carrying and beside it two oddly shaped stones which Ed recognized as pestles such as the early Indians used.

"Just came up from Salmon Point," Ed explained. "I plan to be located here for a while."

This last bit of information caused the man genuine surprise. Ed felt that further explanation was expected of him. Also he believed that the sooner the purpose of his employer was known locally the better it would be for all concerned. This was probably not the man's first visit to the abandoned Indian village in search of curios, Ed thought, as he remembered Mr. Allan's instructions about discouraging souvenir hunters. Therefore he proceeded to explain who he was and why he had been sent here. And to leave no doubt in

the other's mind he concluded by getting out his letter of authority and allowing the man to read it.

When the man had handed it back he glanced at the two pestles with a wry smile.

"Caught me in the act then, didn't you?" he asked.

"You didn't know," Ed commented awkwardly. "But that letter sort of shows what I've got to do. You can see how it is."

"Certainly, my boy. And I think I can help you. I'm backing a settlement scheme in the bay just north of here and I'll make it plain to my people that nothing over here is to be molested in any way. Strowli's my name."

"Why, thanks, Mr. Strowli. It'll help all round if they know how things stand."

"I'll see to it that they do know, Sibley. No reason on earth why we shouldn't be neighborly," the settlement manager said as he stood and picked up his shovel from the log. He indicated the two stone implements.

"Shall I take those back or will you do it for me?"

Ed hesitated. After Benson's veiled hints, after what he had heard from the fisherman down at the Point, it was a great relief to know that the man in charge at Beaver Cove was friendly. The success of his work as guardian depended largely on creating the right attitude toward the project. He had

hunted and fished too much to imagine that, single-handed, he could protect the game on this large tract from being depleted. If people wanted to, they could do a great deal to thwart him; if they were friendly the chances were bright that he could create a well populated game sanctuary here. Well, thanks to the generous spirit of Mr. Strowli, they were going to be friendly.

"Those pestles aren't of much account," he found himself saying. "If you really want them, why, take 'em. I guess after your offer to help, my boss would back me up in that."

"That's not the way I do business, Sibley. I could hardly expect my people to leave things here alone if I didn't, could I now? You take charge of them. I must be going or I'll have to buck the tide rounding the point."

As he walked with the big man down to the rowboat, Ed felt that he had been rebuked. Why, to Mr. Strowli it must have looked as if he had been offering him a trifling bribe and though nothing but straight gratitude had been in his mind, Ed still felt an embarrassment he could not altogether hide as he helped launch the rowboat.

"Drop over to see us soon, Sibley," the man invited as he shipped his oars and turned the boat. "Always glad to see visitors. We don't get many."

"I'll do that, soon's I get squared away," Ed called back. "Lucky I met you."

But as he watched the boat move down the cove

Derry at least did not seem to think that their meeting with Mr. Strowli was a fortunate one for his master. He stood at the water's edge, his feet firmly planted, and as he stared after the rowboat the signs of watchfulness and of distrust which he had shown while the two talked back there on the logs did not lessen.

"Say, brother, what in blazes is gettin' into you?" Ed asked disgustedly. "All the time you kep' sizing him up like he'd pinched one of your prize bones."

Derry tilted his muzzle and glanced up at Ed with slighting disbelief; then his gaze turned back toward the boat.

"No need to get sniffy about it," Ed told him. "Snap out of it and let's have a *nannich* at the village."

They camped that evening on the edge of the beach in front of the ruins of the Indian houses and after an early supper Ed continued his examination of the place. He had found the moss covered midden heaps near the houses where for centuries the vanished natives had thrown clam shells, fish bones and other refuse. In the side of one of these he saw where Strowli had shovelled out the crumbling shells and unearthed the two pestles. Derry thought it an excellent place for burrowing. The shells were so old they had lost their sharp edges and before Ed knew what was

happening he found himself being pelted with debris from Derry's flying paws.

"Go to it," Ed laughed. "But remember I'm in fifty-fifty with anything you find." He moved on, leaving the Airedale engrossed in his self-imposed task.

The last rays of sunlight slanted low through the tree openings, lighting up the gloomy interiors of the houses.

The old potlatch house with its strikingly carved pillars and with here and there a pencil of light coming in through openings between the split cedar planks of the walls, seemed heavy with memories. The white youth stood there in the brooding hush and imagined the wild feastings which had taken place in this long building generations ago. The village would be well populated and strong in those days before the white man came, and the potlatches would be carried out with all their primitive ritual. In the leaping fire-light *mesatchie* and *zinc* men would dance with wild frenzy, to quickening drum beats, while hundreds of intent faces watched from the wavering shadows.

Outside the carved totem poles, some already rotting at the base, stood like grotesque sentries above the deserted dwellings. On them were carved the bear, the thunder-bird, the sea otter and other images which told the lineage of the

village notables for whom they had been erected. Soon decay would claim even these last ancestral records.

Ed went back to the midden heaps to find Derry, panting and satisfied, sprawling among the litter of shells.

“Reckon we’ll go up the crick a bit tomorrow,” Ed told the grinning dog. “This place is interesting—but not so cheerful as it might be. Anyhow we’d do better if we located somewhere near the center of the tract.”

Derry stood up briskly and shook the shell dust from his coat. Whirling unexpectedly, he reared up and planted his forepaws on Ed’s chest, then straining upwards looked intently into the face above. The fun of digging had overcome the grim wariness he had shown in Stowli’s presence and looking into the brown eyes Ed saw the affection glowing there. Only rarely did the Airedale have these demonstrative moments and, thinking he was asking forgiveness for his unfriendliness toward Stowli, Ed’s arm went round Derry’s hard muscled shoulder.

“Not going to be suspicious of him any more, are you?” Ed said. “I figger Mr. Stowli’s a square shooter and I want you to treat him like one. All right, then. Let’s get a bit more firewood before we turn in. Come on.” And springing back, Ed raced toward camp while Derry dodged and leaped ahead of him barking in riotous delight.

Next morning, in that delicate and tranquil hour before sun up, Ed breakfasted and broke camp. Season after season of living out of doors had never dulled its charm for him. In the deep woods, on mountains and beside the Northland's droning rivers he had watched dawn usher in that hour. The fear of being thought sentimental would have made him stoutly deny it, yet like many another and older woodsman Ed Sibley found in that hour something more than just a feast of scenery for the eyes. Morning after morning, with only his dogs for company, Ed had done the camp's routine tasks quietly while something deep within him was soothed and strengthened by this rare feeling of nearness to the eternal harmony of all creation.

Even Derry seldom became boisterous during this early morning quiet. For him it was a time when the bonds which hold all dogs to the ways of men became least strong. His careful explorations were more like those of some wild creature that must depend altogether on his own skill to gain a livelihood.

So keen was he to see what lay in the woods along the shore, that he was slow to obey Ed's gesture to get into the boat as it was being pushed off. He pretended he had not seen Ed and started for the trees. He held his head well up, seemed to be staring hard at something in the bushes ahead, and lifted his forefeet ridiculously high. But as

always the guilty droop to his tail betrayed him.

“Hey you!” Ed called.

Derry stopped and looked back with surprised innocence.

“About time you stopped trying to run that sandy on me. Why don’t you cook up a new one. Come on now, hop in.”

Derry had held slight hope that his bluff would work. He sprang into the bow readily enough, and while Ed stood, facing forward, and rowed fisherman fashion by pushing on the oars, the Airedale took up his favorite position as lookout.

They were moving into the creek mouth. The cove was unruffled and in the strengthening light they could see the clear bottom twenty feet below. The stem post of the boat puckered the smooth fabric of the surface, pushing through it with little purling sounds which rose and fell with every stroke on the oars.

Looking down, Derry could see the bottom. Patches of eel grass and other water plants seemed like jungle islands, their tops swaying sinuously in the slow current from the creek. Between the weed islands were winding lanes and tunnels, shadowy and secretive. Schools of sticklebacks and small sea perch browsed among them, sometimes scattering quickly as if in fear of attack from cod or other preying fish lurking among the weeds. As the boat came nearer the creek a large green cod shot away toward deeper water.

Its tail thrusts set the weeds swirling and in his excitement Derry all but fell over the side trying to mark its line of flight.

"Hold 'er, deacon," Ed chuckled. "You're no otter."

Derry grinned back at him, then looked quickly ahead.

The flanking walls of evergreens were closing in on them and in the stretch of creek ahead their upper branches met in places to form a tunnel in which lurked the last gray remnants of the night. Out of the heavy timber came a swamp robin's cool, unruffled song.

The creek was quickening, and edging toward the right bank to get poling bottom, Ed unshipped the oars and taking one stood in the stern and poled the heavy boat into the current. It seemed like old times to be bucking a stream again and, as he looked ahead, a compelling fancy came to him. The high arch of boughs was a green gateway, the gateway of new country, his own unpeopled kingdom in which a new life and new adventure waited. Oh, it was good, good, to be alive this morning, to have escaped from the involved and artificial life of cities.

"Never again, Derry lad," Ed exclaimed fervently. "Thank goodness there's still a lot of British Columbia they haven't put a roof over yet. An' all of it belongs to the likes of us."

As if he had caught some of his master's exul-

tation Derry yelped jubilantly and sprang as far toward shore as he could. The water closed over his head, then a few quick strokes placed his feet on bottom and he ploughed ashore, shook himself and looked questioningly at Ed. With the air laden with that good old smell of moist woods no dog that was a dog could be expected to sit meekly in a boat. He lowered his head between his widespread forepaws and with a quick glance behind him, asked Ed if he could go.

"All right," Ed told him. "I feel like that myself this morning."

Ed kept on upstream until almost noon. Sometimes Derry returned to the creek to follow the boat, but more often he was ranging the woods ahead. Several times he swam the stream or waded a riffle where the churning water almost swept him from his feet.

Ed's progress was slow. The boat was not made for such work and also it was often necessary to take the ax and slash a passage through the tops of fallen trees which blocked the stream. At times he did not make a quarter of a mile an hour. Then there would be wider reaches, places where the ruins of old beaver dams had made a series of tiny lakes which flooded back among the alders and willows. Here the current scarcely moved and now and then a feeding trout rose and left circles spreading on the surface.

When at last he was through the last of these

ponds Ed estimated he was something over a mile from the cove. Ahead the creek narrowed down into a boulder-strewn, well defined channel. It would be a waste of time to try and get farther up with this boat and so Ed went ashore. There was a flat, several acres in size, on the north side of the stream; cedars suitable for building grew close to hand; there was even a small spring which unlike the stream, would always be clear even in times of heavy freshet. After a half hour examination of the place, Ed carried his outfit and provisions ashore and made a lean-to shelter with his tarpaulin.

"We'll throw up a cabin right here near the spring," he informed Derry who, after drinking at the spring, had thrown himself down panting in the shade.

Derry burrowed deeper into the cool leaf mould. He had been dashing about at top speed for hours and now he was ready for his siesta. The off-hand glance he gave his master said that he did not know what Ed was talking about but that it was quite all right with him. Then finding a soft spot for his outstretched muzzle, he sighed contentedly and dropped into a drowse.

DURING the days which followed Ed had little time to think of Benson's warning about what was likely to befall him if he took charge of the Totem Creek game sanctuary. For one thing he was too busy, and for another, his meeting with the affable Mr. Strowli had given him confidence. With such an influential friend in the district he felt he need have little concern about interference from the settlers over at Beaver Cove. So far as he could find out there were no other people, either whites or Indians, who might prey upon the wild life here. And only the hostility of people in the vicinity could prevent him from succeeding.

Morning after morning Ed lighted his breakfast fire in front of his shelter long before sun-up. Day after day he worked with cross-cut, ax and peavy, getting out the cedar logs for the cabin he was building beside the bubbling spring. Each night found him healthily tired and ready to turn in by the time dusk fell. Only on Sunday did he leave the building and make a cruise through the immense flat in the angle between the creek and the foothills to the south. The possibilities for building up a splendid trout preserve in the tributary streams and ponds there delighted him.

What he saw in one pond alone, proved that. As

he and Derry worked their way through the alders to its upper end an immense trout broke water. Time after time they saw it rise in mighty rushes. Ed had never seen a rainbow so large as this one. "We'll call him 'Skookum' " he decided. "If we find a good pond that needs stocking that's the first fish we'll get for it." As he examined other ponds along this tributary stream he was highly pleased with the good trout water he found. There were many feeder streams to look at, ponds to circle and beaver meadows to explore for signs of wild life, and it was well past sundown before dog and youth returned to camp.

Derry had been elated when Ed left his work on the cabin and consented to tramp through the woods with him that day. So on Monday when he saw Ed settle down to building again, he watched this return to routine with growing boredom. And, being Derry, he was quite capable of informing Ed of the fact.

When he irked at restraint or when Ed had been forced to curb his high spirits, Derry's very pose told what a clod this energetic Airedale thought his master to be. He would sit first in one noticeable place, then in another, taking care to keep just enough out of the way to escape the charge of getting under foot, and yet so near Ed could not help seeing him. Then he would hunch sideways so that one shoulder blade protruded most uncomfortably, let his ears droop and, fairly

dripping disgust, would fix disillusioned eyes on some imaginary object far, far away from the world of blundering humans.

This morning as he watched Ed bucking logs into lengths for the cabin walls he seemed to think that anyone who persisted in such grubby work while the woods were calling was a downright fool.

Ed, knowing right well what he was thinking, only grinned. Derry caught his glance, then in retaliation he lifted his muzzle and sniffed with fastidious disdain, as if he had found a most unpleasant odor in his immediate neighborhood.

Ed straightened his back and laughed.

"And then they talk about 'dumb animals,'" he said. "All right. Go for a run if you want to."

Ed's gesture brought Derry to his feet like a shot.

"You mean that?" his snapping eyes asked. And when he knew his hopes were confirmed, he gave one hilarious bark and vanished.

An hour later he was half a mile up the creek. The hills converged here. Ahead the draw deepened and now and then through openings in the boughs Derry could see the flanking mountains. On the northward rock faces patches of snow stood out in vivid contrast to the shadows framing them. At the bottom of the sidehill the creek ran noisily. The lichen spotted trunks of the big cedars rose like shapely columns to the green roof overhead.

A human might have sensed the frowning disinterest, the vast aloofness of the place, but Derry was immune from such fancies. Only a little way down the valley he had concluded what he felt was a satisfactory bout with two jeering stellar jays. He was jaunty, well pleased with himself. And then as he trotted on he found the scent of a trail which brought him to a sudden, vigilant halt. Derry paused a moment, testing each track and then started up the sidehill.

But a few minutes running showed him that he was back-trailing. The man had come from the north, out of a hidden trail between the rock bluffs which became more rugged toward the Beaver Cove side of the point. Down the slope he came on the run, his tail erect, the hair on his shoulders rising as the conviction that he knew this scent grew upon him. By the time he had reached the creek and crossed on a footlog he knew he was following the lurker in the bushes at the Indian village—the man to whom his master had been friendly.

Although Nature has not given to dogs the power of speech, she has endowed them with a sense which, while limited, is sometimes a surer guide to understanding than the spoken word can be. Except for a few simple utterances, words in themselves mean nothing to a dog; but, to offset this lack, dogs have built up, through observation, a standard for judging human character which

seldom errs. Fair words may deceive a man. A dog is forced to look for other signs. With ears trained to catch the meaning behind the tone, with eyes that see what human eyes so often miss, it is harder to deceive dog than master.

So now as he ran on, Derry knew what only bitter experience during the coming months could reveal to Ed. He knew that Strowli, the smooth voiced, the affable one, was false at heart.

As he kept on the route Strowli had taken, Derry did not trail as a hound would do. Airedales are bred from the bulldog, the otter hound, the sheepdog and the terrier. The breed has been established less than a hundred years, and the natures of its individuals vary. Though in spirit Derry had something of the bulldog about him, in the woods the hound and terrier showed most plainly. He was quick to follow a scent yet, like his terrier forebears, he did not trust to his sense of smell alone. He looked ahead, using his eyes more than a hound would do. Thus, while he might overrun the trail, he did not run blindly. Once this habit had saved him from a dog-slaying cougar. Now it saved him from discovery by this man he knew had deceived his master.

A mile south of the creek, Strowli's track bore westward, into the lush alder bottoms Derry and Sibley had traversed only the day before. These were the pools and reaches of creek which Ed had found superbly suited for trout. And as Derry ran

softly he caught signs of movement through the sun dappled trunks ahead. He stopped and, from his safe hiding place, watched Strowli. This was the very pool where Ed had lingered watching the mighty rises of the rainbow trout he had dubbed "Skookum."

From a sunny opening somewhere on the alder flat, Derry could hear the quickening wing beats of a male willow grouse as its mating summons floated far through the spring sunshine. It sounded like the distant drumming of a tom-tom to herald the triumph of returning spring. On a tall spruce stub near the pool at whose head Strowli stood was perched a bald headed eagle. Its white head and tail showed vividly in contrast to the weathered trunk of its lookout.

Derry edged a few feet to the left. He could see Strowli more plainly as he stood in the shallows at the top of the pool. He could even see the water swirling around his glistening waders as he eyed the surface of the stream. Then, not thirty feet away, where the fast water surged down between spray drenched boulders, the big rainbow trout which Ed and Derry had seen the day before, rose again.

The splash made the terrier's head lift suddenly. So superbly strong was the big fish that the ripples from his rise spread even into the calm water. The talons of the eagle shifted slightly at sight of the five pound ruler of the pool. A fish

with back so superbly rounded, with flanks so hard and silvery, was a feast worth waiting for.

Strowli stared at the spreading ripples in amazed delight. He had visited this pool the summer before and had made up his mind to fish it again, but never had he dreamed that it contained a trout so large as this. He found a sly pleasure in the thought that while this gullible youth was working somewhere near the mouth of the main creek, he had crossed overland from Beaver Cove and penetrated the very heart of the sanctuary. It would be a long time before Sibley found that secret trail through the rock bluffs. If he did not land the trout today, he certainly would come again. And yet Strowli, being an experienced angler, saw no reason why he should not kill the big rainbow trout now.

He untied the tapes of his rod case and, going to the bank, began settling up his rod. When he had threaded the smooth casting line through the guides, he knotted to it a leader already moist and limp, and brought out his fly box. Then, threading the gut through the eye of the hook, he faced obliquely downstream. Derry could see every feature of the large face as the man began switching the slender rod back and forth above his head, at the same time pulling line from the reel with his left hand. A preparatory cast well to the left of the feeding trout showed that he had a good

thirty feet of line out. This was enough to reach the last rise.

Elbow well in to his side, he brought the rod smartly to a vertical position, paused while the line straightened out behind him and then, steadily, unhurriedly, he brought it forward until it paralleled the surface. It was a cast which would have won admiration from even so keen a fly fisherman as Ed Sibley. The line rolled out and the fly came to the surface as lightly as a snow flake. Drawing in a foot or two of slack line, the poacher looped it lightly in his left hand and twitched the rod tip as it slowly lifted. The fly was over the last rise now.

But since that rise the big trout which Ed had seen the day before, had moved two yards upstream. A foot above the bottom he lay, poised and ready, easily holding himself head on where the current was swiftest. He did not see the fly. His bluish back, with its sprinkling of round black spots, and his silver sides, each marked with its lateral band of red, made him almost invisible against the white and gray mosaic of pebbles. The surge of the fast water threw grotesque, moving patterns of shadow across him. And then, straight ahead and above, he saw the fly as it was falling to the surface a second time.

The fly never struck the water. With unbelievable speed Skookum shot upward, hurled himself

clear and seized it while it was still a foot above the surface. Even from where he stood, Derry could see the pure silver as the morning sunlight flashed on his under side. Then the huge rainbow went under, leaving a foaming swirl. Not until he swung head on into the current again did the trout suspect the unnaturalness of the fly he had seized so avidly.

Even then he did not know how great its menace was. He shook his head, trying to break away from the slight but steady strain of the line. It seemed to yield but as he swerved into faster water the maddening pull increased and he knew he had been tricked. With vicious suddenness the battle began.

Swinging about, Skookum charged down toward the wider, deeper reach at the lower end of the pool. There, under the tangled sticks of a rotting beaver dam, was his lair. He had spent the winter in hiding there and now he wanted to gain it. Above him the taut line tore a foaming rent through the smooth fabric of the surface. The terrific speed increased as he sighted his lair, then changing his course, shot parallel to the barrier of the old beaver dam. Close to the bank he hesitated for a split second, seeming to feel that he had shaken free of his invisible enemy. Then the poacher twitched his bowed rod, increasing the strain. And then it was that the big trout began

those tactics which have earned for the rainbow of the Pacific coast the reputation of being among the gamiest and most spectacular sporting fish in all the world.

Doubling back on the line he headed for the top of the pool, then cutting sharply upward, Skookum hurled himself into a curving leap. Two yards farther on he came down to the surface and seemed actually to bounce upward, this second time going a good three feet into the air. A third leap followed immediately and then, diving, he kept close to the bottom as he shot into the fast water again.

The speed and strength of his wild maneuvers were irresistible. The angler on the bank was still frantically recovering the slack line when Skookum, close to the bottom now, raced downstream for his lair below the underscoured beaver dam. Under and up through the tangle of old cuttings he shot. The line fouled, the leader came taut with a savage jerk, the hook pulled loose and Skookum was free again.

On the bank, seventy feet away, the unsuccessful poacher stood and slowly reeled in the limp line. Even before he saw the broken hook he knew how the big trout had outwitted him, and he knew it would be futile to fish the pool again that day. He began to take down his rod and as he did so he studied the water, noting every under-water

hazard in preparation for the combat he was planning—the combat in which he, and not the huge rainbow, would be the victor.

Derry watched Stowli mount the bank, disappear behind the bushes then come into view again upstream. He waded the small creek and then Derry lost sight of him as he started back the way he had come.

When he could no longer see the bulky figure through the sunlight and shadow of the alder woods, the Airedale advanced cautiously to the cut-bank at the pool's lower end. He saw a sinister shadow skim the surface and looked up in time to watch the eagle glide again to its lookout on the spruce stub. Neither he nor the big rainbow sulking in the gloom ten feet below the bank could know how soon they and the poacher would meet again.

That morning Derry followed Stowli's trail as far as the sidehill where he had first come upon it. Then he headed for camp. He would have liked to linger at the pool in hopes of seeing the big fish again, but already he had been away from Ed too long. However, even if he had stayed at the hidden pool, he would not have sighted the fish, for Skookum did not leave his hiding place until the long spring twilight was falling. The shadows of the willows and alders had grown long across the pool and had melted into the spreading dusk before he swam slowly to the feeding place below

the boulders. Until day had surrendered complete to the night, he fed there, warily at first, then hurling himself at the stone fly larvae which the fast water carried down to him. Had Derry returned to the pool that evening, the swirling rises, the occasional flashes of silver and the spreading circles would have excited him. But there was none to watch. Even the eagle vanished at sundown.

So rich was the forage, and with such unerring vigor did he capture it, that by nightfall Skookum was gorged and indifferent to food. Such active feeding explained why there was no trout in all the Totem Creek valley to equal him in perfection of form, in strength or fighting spirit. Others of his kind might desert their native creeks for the sluggish ponds below or for the brackish water off the creek mouth. But for him the fast water held an allure, a challenge, not to be found in the easy living lower down the valley. On the clean gravel of a riffle at the head of the pool he had been born and here he had remained until now, in his seventh spring, he was the pool's undisputed overlord. And until Ed Sibley came no human eye had found him.

Tonight when he had gorged himself he returned to his lair. Sometimes he would lie in the narrow eddies at the pool's upper end until the filtering dawn heralded the morning feeding time. But now, by that undefined sense which warns

most fish of an approaching change in weather, Skookum sensed the rainstorm which was already gathering back in the mountains. He turned and swam indolently to his lair, and there, deep down, he was lying under the overhang of rotting sticks when the first big drops began to fall.

These first drops came with a measured regularity, each pricking the surface sharply and raising a bubble that gyrated slowly in the gloom. Suddenly the tiny dome of each was illumined by a flash of lightning. Thunder volleyed among the hills and then, as if this had been a signal, the rain came pounding down.

When tardy dawn came at last, the creek was rising rapidly. The full violence of the deluge had struck along the mountain side where the stream rose. For miles along its banks countless rivulets spilled their overflow into the creek.

When Skookum moved uneasily from the gloom of his lair, he swam through an unbroken cloud of silt. Particles of rotten leaves, spruce needles and root fibres mingled with the earth stain of the swirling water. The sensitive nerves along his flanks caught the dull pounding of falling water. It came both from the bottleneck among the boulders at the head of the pool and from below him, where the stream swept over the rotting barrier the beavers had left. Skookum moved to the narrow back eddy behind a stone. He was moody,

vaguely uneasy because of some danger not yet defined.

While he lay in the cramped refuge behind the stone he became aware of an abrupt change in the direction of the current. He was swinging about to meet it head on when the flow, even the banks of the pool, seemed to tremble, and then the thousands of tons of pent-up water charged past him in a solid wall. The old beaver dam, unrepaired for years, had burst!

Pebbles, water-logged sticks, even the stone behind which Skookum had taken refuge, began to move, dragged along the bottom by the terrific suction of the widening break. Skookum, caught broadside, was rolled half over. He lurched, dodged, strove mightily to keep from being swept away.

Through the silt fog, unseen on either side of him, some of the smaller trout were zigzagging to right and left, searching vainly for a hiding place. But among the moving debris of the bottom there was no safe refuge to be found. Only Skookum and a few of the trout which chanced to be in the backwash close to shore were left where the pool had been. And of them all Skookum was the only one powerful enough to successfully fight the full sweep of released water. The scores of lesser fish were carried through the breach.

Not until late that day, when the sun shone

again through the clearing water, did Skookum realize how his domain had been devastated. There were no deep holes now, no varied currents and backwaters. Instead, the incoming water fell straight over the boulders and, because the bottom of the pool had been scoured out, new banks had formed. These had narrowed the channel to only ten feet. Nowhere could the great trout find more than a foot of water to cover him. In growing alarm he retreated to where the dam had been. But now the current was divided into a score of rivulets among the tangled sticks. Up the pool to the pounding waterfall he sped; then, finding no refuge there, came part way back again. He was trapped and at the mercy of his enemies.

Next morning at sunrise the eagle returned to its fishing lookout on the old spruce. The water of the creek was clear again and, from that point of vantage, the keen eyes of the feathered fisherman could mark every trout in the torn channel. Deliberately he spread his powerful wings, hopped from the branch and swooped. His shadow swept like a threat upon the surface and Skookum, warned but powerless to escape to deeper water, shot downstream as if seeking the lost safety of his lair. The eagle banked steeply and dropped for him.

In a desperate effort to escape, Skookum charged at the tangle of sticks. But it was like a net cunningly spread to capture him. The water

frothed between the old beaver cuttings but there was no room for a fish his size to pass through. With a mighty effort he hurled himself about, his spread tail found purchase against the sticks and he threw himself clear just as the eagle, with spread talons, dropped on him.

Up the channel Skookum raced, the speed of his heavy body leaving a following wave which betrayed his course to his enemy. The eagle whistled exultantly and glided in pursuit. He knew that the great trout was his, that the shallows offered it no protection and that only persistence was needed to corner it.

As he glided closer to his quarry, one of the lesser trout, thrown into panic by the moving shadow, shot away and, in trying to turn again, its tail thrashed clear of the surface. Stones blocked its way and its flank was exposed. The eagle shot down and a second later bore it, straining and writhing, to the top of the spruce.

Half an hour later the sinister shadow glided over the surface again. This time Skookum shot upstream to the falls. But the plunging water, striking a ledge of hardpan which the freshet had exposed, proved more treacherous even than the ruin of the beaver dam. His broad tail sent the water spouting in jets behind him as he turned back from it.

Hardly was he clear of the spray of the falls when the eagle plunged. Its talons grazed the

big trout's back, but, dodging, Skookum got clear and the feathered enemy rose heavily, sighted him and swooped again. To left and right, up and down Skookum darted, but the eagle, not to be eluded so easily a second time, kept behind him, craftily following as the trout came closer and closer to the foaming tangle of old branches.

For just a second the eagle hovered, its great wings beating the air. It whistled its triumph and was in the very act of diving to sink its talons through the struggling back when it caught signs of movement in the willows of the near bank. It zoomed steeply, eyeing the intruder, yet determined not to surrender the prize.

Stowli plunged clear of the brush and stared at the mud-coated area of gravel where the pool had been only two days before. And the eagle, seeing Skookum hopelessly fouled among the sticks, folded its wings and dropped like a plummet. Not until that fatal second did the poacher from Beaver Cove see the great trout. He leaped to the end of the ruined dam, and, slipping and stumbling along its crest, tried to reach the breach.

But the eagle, with victory at hand, was not to be driven off so easily. Only a chance writhe saved Skookum. The hooked beak sought for him among the smother of water and silt which his striving tail threw up. The whole mat of sticks shook as the poacher leaped down into the opening. The eagle soared and circled boldly overhead.

But Strowli did not heed it. The sportsman's creed would have made it impossible for a real angler to have taken Skookum this way. But Strowli's only desire was to possess the prize trout. No careful angling was needed now. With straining gill covers Skookum lay at his feet. All the man need do was reach down among the sticks, seize him and send him spinning onto the bank.

But at that very instant a dog barked arrestingly from the far bank. Strowli whirled and saw young Sibley's Airedale. And Derry, seeing the furtiveness of this man he had been following, broke into a savage clamor which, had he been anywhere near, would have brought Ed Sibley running to the spot.

"Get out, blast you!" Strowli ordered in an angry whisper. Then he made the mistake of snatching up a chunk of wood and hurling it at Derry's head.

The Airedale dodged. The terse and carefully lowered voice confirmed his suspicions that Strowli was doing something he was trying to hide. He charged up and down the bank, barking his alarm.

Strowli was making a last desperate attempt to get a hold on the big rainbow which, during the dog's first interruption, had slipped perilously close to the deep water below the ruins of the dam. Derry's second outburst made him still more angry. Brandishing a water-logged stick, he

rushed at the Airedale, and, at that very moment, Skookum rolled down the slope, hung a moment on a protruding root and then slipped into the foam speckled water below. He lay on the bottom for a few seconds and then, while Strowli made wild thrusts for him with his stick, he righted himself and, with powerful tail sweeps, sped down the creek to safety.

Strowli, seeing his prize gone, lost not a moment in gaining the cover of the far bank. For all he knew, young Sibley might have heard his dog's alarm. For the last year he had enjoyed the hunting and fishing of Totem Creek valley and he had no intention of staying out of it now simply because this free-and-easy Sibley had come to look after things. But just the same he must be careful. Sibley had the law on his side, and it would not do to be careless about his visits here.

When he was safely hidden by the brush, Strowli paused and looked at the terrier standing truculently on the far bank.

"If you don't mind your own business, you'll turn up missing some morning," he grunted.

Derry, his head thrust forward, jaws clamped aggressively, answered the threat with a growl. From that day until the climax came at Beaver Cove, he and Strowli were enemies.

IT was almost a month after his arrival at Totem Creek before Ed accepted Mr. Strowli's invitation to visit the settlement at Beaver Cove. And when at last he did go there it was not to make a friendly call but to protest to the promoter against the inroads which an unknown marauder was making on the wild life of the Totem Creek sanctuary.

For the two weeks following Derry's discovery of the poacher's attempt to capture the big rainbow, not a day passed that Ed did not put in several hours' work on the cabin. Sometimes in the early morning he would make a quick trip through some new part of the lower end of the preserves; sometimes he would make himself an early supper and tramp the woods until dusk. But he made no thorough attempt to inspect the woods until his headquarters were well on the way to completion.

"Got to have some place to cache this grub out of the wet," he explained to the restless terrier. "Trying to store it under an eight foot 'tarp' is asking for trouble. Soon's I get the roof on we'll dangle. You can barge off if you want to."

This arrangement suited Derry. So, each morning when he had, after the manner of an exacting overseer, watched Ed settle down to work, he

would leave the sunny opening near the spring and explore the ground higher up the creek.

Could Ed have followed him he would have been surprised to see that, after a short excursion into near-by thickets, Derry always struck off in a direct line toward the place where he had first found Strowli's track. And when he had reached that spot he would strike north until he came to a ravine between the first rock bluffs. Here the hidden trail was well defined and here Derry would carefully test the ground with his muzzle to see if there had been visitors during the night.

One morning, while Ed was busy splitting cedar shakes to roof the cabin, Derry set off to the eastward as usual. And when he reached the start of the trail, a mile away, his nose told him that a man had come and gone along it within the last few hours. In places where the dew still lay on the salal bushes and the moss, the scent was strong. It was a scent he had never found before, and here and there where the salal grew high there was the odor of a freshly killed deer. Excitedly the Airedale quartered the ground, then, returning to the trail, began to back-track the deer scent. He angled down the sidehill, through the heavy timber and came at last to a leafy place where the gnarled trunks of vine maples sprawled over the damp ground. At the far edge of the thicket he stopped suddenly beside the still warm offal of a deer.

Derry circled the spot with the utmost caution. Because of his years in the north country, the finding of such remains was no new thing to him. Where men hunted for food he had frequently come upon such scenes as this. He had in fact often been with Ed while the meat of caribou, deer or mountain goat was being cut up. But his caution was prompted by the knowledge that men sometimes set cougar traps in just such places as this. And like a good outdoor dog he was "trap wise." He would not come close to the remains until he had examined every square inch of the ground with both eyes and nose.

Even then he was not satisfied that everything was well. He could not possibly know that his master had been sent to Totem Creek to prevent such hunting as this. To him the forest was no different here from any other he and Ed had roved. And yet he felt a vague suspicion that all was not as it should be. Out of that same ravine trail he had known one man to come—a man who behaved in a guilty way when he had been discovered. In his mind that trail was associated with crafty comings and goings. And he knew that men and animals who walked boldly did not need to be watched like the ones that came by hidden round-about ways.

That noon when he returned to the cabin Ed noted an undefinable change in the Airedale. Between these two, who had lived so much in the

north's untravelled valleys, there had grown a subtle means of communication. Only Ed, who knew intimately Derry's every shade of feeling, could have discovered the change since the dog had left camp that morning. And even Ed could not have described it in words.

"The old duffer's got something on his mind. He's a bit edgy," he might have said.

So now he saw that Derry was inclined to be restless. He stretched out on the warm bracken, only to get up, move to another spot and lie down again. The good-natured tussle they had after the meal lacked its usual zest, and, after an absent-minded inspection of the near-by brush piles, Derry seemed to want to get into the woods again. Ed called him back.

"What's eatin' you old-timer?" Ed asked. "Come on, spill it." Derry's only answer was to sit down resignedly and yawn.

Ed stood another bolt of straight grained cedar on end and reached for the froe. He placed the tool—shaped something like a very large draw knife with one inverted handle—half an inch in from the edge of the block and struck it with a vine maple club he had cut for the purpose. When the edge was well into the block he twisted the froe sideways. The split opened with a sharp crackling. Ed bore down on the handle and another shake, a foot wide and thirty inches long, lay on the pile

at his feet. Then he put down the tool and started thoughtfully toward his canvas shelter.

"Seeing you can't tell me," he observed, "mebbe you can show me. You've seen something doesn't look right to you or I'm a Siwash."

A few minutes later when he saw Ed pick up his light ax and start slowly into the woods, Derry was delighted. As nearly as Ed could recall, Derry had started eastward, or upstream, when he left the clearing that morning. Ed moved leisurely in that direction now, and when Derry came bounding back to him to make sure which way they were headed Ed pointed ahead.

"This is your show, mister," he said. "Like as not it's a wild goose chase."

And for a while it seemed nothing more than that. After he had enjoyed his usual squabble with the jays, Derry found a red squirrel which seemed to need disciplining. He crashed into a windfall where the squirrel had vanished, only to find, after a five minute struggle with the thicket, that the squirrel was fifty feet up a spruce tree, chittering impudently at him. After this exertion he had to dash down the slope and get himself a drink of water.

But among other useful qualities, the woods had taught Ed Sibley patience. Unhampered by civilization's too exacting time sense, he felt he had now, as he sometimes put it "all the time there

is." He had learned not to let himself be made uneasy by delays for which he was not responsible. It was a habit of great value in observing the ways of wild creatures. And like the wild things, Derry could not be hurried into doing what Ed hoped he would do that afternoon.

After Derry came galloping up from the creek he started on again. And as they went farther from camp, the habit of the previous days asserted itself. His side trips became less frequent and soon he was jogging toward the mouth of the ravine.

This northern edge of the sanctuary was new to Ed who had done most of his exploring in the more likely looking area of alder flat and beaver meadows south of the stream. But when at last he reached the ravine and saw the clearly marked trail leading north, he was not slow in realizing the importance of the find.

"Those settlers done a good bit of hunting over this way before Mr. Strowli told them to lay off," he mused. "Or mebbe the trail doesn't go to the settlement at all. I better find that out right now."

For perhaps half a mile, Ed followed the trail which mounted among the bluffs until he reached what he took to be the backbone of the ridge separating Totem Creek from the valley behind Beaver Cove. Then, scrambling to a moss-grown outcrop of rock, he looked down.

While Derry stood beside him, panting after a

hurried detour through the brush, Ed tried to make out clearings below. Through the spired tops of the evergreens on the slope, he could see bluish pillars of smoke rising from places where the land was being cleared. In the warm air the smoke idled upward like incense offered upon the altars of the spring. The air was very still. No murmuring stream broke the silence and once Ed fancied he heard the bark of a dog from far down in the valley. Recognizing the shred of sound, Derry's ears lifted and he looked up at Ed to learn if he saw anything.

The bed of Beaver Creek was not more than half a mile away, following the curve of the ridge. Through the trees Ed could see small patches of clean washed gravel or boulders. And where it cut close to the shoulder of the ridge, slightly west of where he stood, he could see the thin straight line which marked the shingle bolt flume which Benson had told him had been completed a few weeks before. It was down this flume that the settlers would float the bolts whose sale was their only means of livelihood.

"Trail comes from the settlement, sure enough," Ed decided soberly. "Sort of a back door into Beaver Cove. Thanks for locating it, mister," he added to the terrier. Ed let Derry lead the way down from the lookout and when they were on the trail again he was relieved to find the dog striking back toward Totem Creek.

But when they came to the end of the ravine he was surprised to see Derry stop and sniff the salal brush along the path and then start purposefully off down the slope in a new direction. He could not know that Derry had caught a trace of the deer scent he had discovered that morning, and that the scent had reminded him of what he had found in the vine maple thicket near the stream. Ahead Ed could just see the black and brown form loping out of sight among the big trees.

“He knows where he’s going—and he’s on his way,” Ed thought. “Looks like a sudden notion had struck him. Wonder what’s up.”

But twenty minutes later when he overtook the Airedale, he had no need to wonder. By all the signs he knew, the deer had been killed less than twenty-four hours ago. And with rising resentment he noted from the remains that the slain deer had been a doe.

As he examined the ground more thoroughly, one fact became very clear to him. If Mr. Strowli had warned the settlers that Totem Creek was no longer an open hunting ground—and there was no reason to suppose he had not done so—then this deer had been killed by some one who chose to disregard that warning.

And if the warning had been ignored once, there was every likelihood of its being ignored again.

"Looks like those people don't figger I mean business," he decided.

With Derry at his heels, half understanding his master's purpose, Ed circled more widely around the scene of the kill. Finally he decided that the shot had been fired from the slope down which Derry had led him. The shot must have been fired at close range for, in heavily wooded country like this, Ed knew it was rarely that a hunter would jump a deer and have a chance to fire from any distance. In one place he thought he could make out heel marks in the springy moss. But he could not be sure, and a detailed examination of the slope failed to locate what he had been hoping to find—the empty cartridge case from the poacher's weapon. He gave up and called the Airedale to him.

"Let's you an' me sit on this log and do a bit of straight thinking," he suggested. "I admit finding this gave me a jolt. But there's no use going off the deep end."

Derry came willingly. His nose told him there was nothing new to be found near the scene of the kill, and so he sat upright beside his master. A dead deer was nothing new to him. Any kind of hunting delighted him and he sat looking down the slope with pleased complacency.

Ed had done too much pot hunting during lean seasons in the north to feel outraged at what he had found. A man had to kill his meat where he could

find it. He admitted that. But why would a settler want to come away over here to Totem Creek to hunt when there must be as good hunting nearer home? And why had Strowli's warning been so obviously disregarded? Had Benson been right, and were there people in the country who would purposely go out of their way to make trouble for anyone who acted as game warden on Totem Creek?

Although it was against the law to kill deer of any kind at this time of year, Ed thought it likely that the unknown hunter would have a prospector's license which allowed a person, far from store or trading post, to take venison or other meat for his own needs. He had such a license himself.

"Too bad he couldn't have picked a buck, though," he reflected. "For all I know there may be a hungry little shaver of a fawn moonin' round here somewhere. Come on, pup, we better see if we can locate it."

Thorough quartering of all likely cover above and below the vine maple thicket failed to show signs of a motherless fawn, but as he started homeward Ed decided that it would be just as well to come back here tomorrow and search again. If there was a fawn it must soon die of starvation or fall prey to a prowling cougar.

When he and Derry reached the mouth of the ravine, Ed stopped. Choosing a small hemlock

beside the trail, he lopped off its branches, scored the side of the trunk with his ax and brushed out the path so that the post would be in plain view of anyone coming into the valley. Then he called Derry and went back to camp.

Before dusk he split out a thick shake, axed it smooth on one side and with clasp knife and a stub of pencil made a sign which read:

**“GAME SANCTUARY—
NO HUNTING OR FISHING
SOUTH OF THIS NOTICE.”**

Next morning he took the sign, his ax and a few of his precious nails and went back to the ravine. There he nailed the board to the post he had prepared, went up the trail and viewed his handiwork with satisfaction. When he had made sure that no one could possibly pass the sign without seeing it, he struck down the slope to the vine maple thicket.

“This time I’ll go first, mister,” he warned Derry.

Derry seemed none too pleased but he followed his master quietly and then, when they were down wind from the thicket, he stopped, and a carefully guarded growl left his throat. Ed looked to see what he had discovered. As if to explain matters, Derry looked hard at the thicket and by the rising hair on his neck and shoulders he told his master that it was not the scent of a fawn that he had found.

“Bet it’s a cougar and me without a rifle,” Ed thought excitedly. He was disgusted with himself for having overlooked the possibility of ridding the sanctuary of so cunning a marauder. Should he let Derry try to tree it while he ran to camp and came back with the rifle? Derry knew how to hunt these mountain lions. He had treed his first one before he was a year old, up there in the Twin Forks country.

As he stood there, perfectly motionless, trying to decide upon a plan, Ed saw the tips of the vine maple shake as a heavy body passed through the tangle. Then he saw it was no cougar that had come to feast upon the remains. A patch of black showed through the leaves and a full grown black bear came into view.

Derry shot an appealing look at his master. His shoulder muscles trembled as spasms of intense excitement overcame him. More than anything in all the world he wanted permission to fly at that bear, to dodge and circle, dart in and out, nipping, harrowing, until at last the big creature was forced to climb a tree. Dozens of times he had done this, using all the in-and-out tactics of the trained bear dog to confuse its mighty opponent. But Ed gave him no sign to stir.

Like all its kind the bear was not sharp sighted. It was up wind from the two watchers and no scent of them reached it. Evidently it had feasted to the full on the remains of the deer, for it moved

away, leisurely and stolidly, toward the creek. Backing carefully to slightly higher ground, Ed could see it pass above a log jam and cross the foaming stream on a hemlock which bridged it.

"We knew we had deer and beaver and plenty trout on the place," Ed told the Airedale delightedly. "Now we know we got bear. Things are looking up."

But Derry did not think things were looking up. He regarded his master with heavy disgust and then, as if the slight were too much for his energetic nature, he yawned deliberately. He had led his master to this spot. He had as good as found him this bear and then all Ed did was stare stupidly and let it walk away. Huh! The old man was certainly slipping.

Ed looked at him in amusement and then the twinkle died from his eyes.

"Mebbe we'll have more hunting than we want before we get things straightened out at Totem Crick," Ed told him. "Only it'll be a new kind of hunting for us." Only today had he come to realize the difficulty of his task. There were no people nearer than those at Beaver Cove; they had been warned and they had lost no time in acting in defiance to Mr. Strowli's well meant warning.

Ed began moving down the slope and, with Derry crowding at his heels, he followed the track of the bear to the footlog.

"We'll just trail along and see if there was a

cub cached anywhere across the creek. When we're taking the census we might's well take it right. Scout round and see what you can locate."

Derry needed no second order. In his haste to obey he all but fell off the narrow log into the rushing water. Ed was close behind him when he swerved into a thicket of devil clubs where the old bear's foot marks showed plainly in the silt spread there during some recent freshet.

Among the thorny stalks, Derry came upon the imprint of little paws.

Ed called him to heel and examined the marks.

"The old lady's got a pair of cubs. Left them here while she took a look around. Here's where she started the family up the creek again. Good enough. Now let's follow the creek down and take a look over the beaver ponds in the big flat."

IT was late evening when Ed and Derry got back to camp after their cruise through the miles of alder flat. They had crossed the smaller stream on the ruins of the beaver dam where the big rainbow trout had almost been captured. Ed noted how quickly the rain had brought this stream up while the larger Totem Creek had not come into freshet at all. From his knowledge of the ways of mountain streams, he reasoned that the smaller creek must rise on the mountain side and therefore have a quick run-off. On the other hand, Totem Creek must come from a large swamp or muskeg far back in the hills. Such a place would act as a huge catch basin, conserving the water and allowing it to run off gradually. He must make sure of this for it had a direct bearing on his plans for stocking the main stream with trout.

"We'll have a couple weeks back there at headwaters, some time. But things'll have to shape up better down here before we can take time off for the trip," he reflected.

That night while Derry lay blinking at the embers, Ed sat late before his camp fire, trying to find a way to keep marauders out of the sanctuary and at the same time avoid trouble with the settlers at the cove. Practically all the shakes were

on the cabin roof and Ed could have moved inside, but as long as the weather held good, he preferred to live out of doors. Besides, until he had made a trip to Salmon Point and brought back a sheet metal stove, it was really easier to live under canvas.

Thinking over what had happened recently, Ed saw that unless he could make the settlers see he meant business it would be necessary for him to go to Salmon Point sooner even than he had planned.

"No use going off at half cock," he told himself. "I'll go over to the cove tomorrow and have a talk with some of them. Then if they won't leave Totem Creek alone I'll have to see the police. That's my orders."

It was early the following forenoon when Ed reached the top of the low ridge and started down the trail which wound through the heavy timber cloaking the sidehill above Beaver Creek. A much travelled foot log spanned the little stream and just beyond it was the flume. Ed halted beside the V-shaped trough which had been built from some spot farther up the creek and which led to the distant cove.

"Guess we better leave the trail and follow this," he decided. "Sure to run into somebody working along it."

As soon as he saw which direction his master was taking, Derry trotted ahead. The brisk whis-

pering of flowing water attracted him, and placing his forepaws on the edge of planking, he looked with interest into the flume.

"Careful you don't slip in," Ed cautioned, "or you'll get a quick ride down to the cove."

Derry dropped to the ground. The flume, which had cost so much time and money to build, did not impress him. He was more interested in finding squirrels and in the various scents along the flume path. Here and there the flume crossed gullies by means of pole trestles. Like most dogs, Derry had no fear of height, and walked carelessly over the narrow footplank, staring down at the tops of the undergrowth.

He was fifty yards ahead of Ed, when, glancing down the path, he saw a man approaching. Instantly he halted and watched the oncoming stranger with silent interest. Glancing over his shoulder, he saw that Ed had also sighted the man and, trotting back, he took his place at his master's side.

Ed was the first to speak and when they had exchanged greetings he asked where Mr. Strowli was to be found. In broken English the settler explained that the settlement promoter had a cabin at the cove near the lower end of the flume.

"You from Totem Creek, eh?" he asked, making no attempt to conceal his curiosity.

Ed nodded. If this man was so sure of where he came from, it was also likely he knew why a

man had been posted at Totem Creek at all. And if he knew that, the others must know it too. But until Ed had seen Mr. Strowli it might do more harm than good to discuss the matter of the sanctuary with any of these people.

“Well, guess I’ll be moving,” Ed said and made as if to go on.

Feeling that this youth did not want to talk about Totem Creek the settler tried to speak of other matters. It was not often that anyone from the outside world penetrated this obscure valley, and a new face was always welcomed.

“Good eh?” he asked with a broad smile, pointing to the flume.

“Pretty good all right. Run any bolts yet?”

“Run soon now. Plenty bolts cut. T’ousand cords mebbe. Everybody got bolts to sell. Everybody cut bolts since we come here last year.”

“Who buys ’em?” Ed asked. In the man’s animated face he could read the hope and anxiety of the past twelve months. But now the flume was finished and when the year’s cut of bolts had been sold there would be money for building decent homes, for implements, perhaps even for a school for the children. Having come from a pioneer home, Ed could understand what the flume meant to these people. Its operation meant the difference between success and failure for them and their families. And Ed felt a stronger desire to do all he could to protect the sanctuary from law-

breaking settlers without bringing in the police.

"We not know who buys our bolts," the settler was saying. "Mister Strowli sells for all of us. Good man, Mister Strowli."

"But you haven't sold any at all yet?"

"No." Doubt showed on the man's face. Then it brightened. "Mister Strowli he send for scow and tugboat. One—two mont' ago. Scow don't come yet. Too bad to hold us back that-a-way. But Mister Strowli he go to Salmon Point, come back, say scow come soon now. Then everything all right. Lota money this summer for everybody. I buy a horse this summer," he ended with a simple pride.

As he and Derry went on down the flume trail, Ed knew that only as a last resort must he bring trouble to these people by informing the police of their refusal to obey the law. In the back of his mind was a new thought—a thought that would not down. He, son of a pioneer, who knew what these people were undergoing in order to live, had undertaken to prevent them from getting venison on the Totem Creek hunting grounds. These people needed the meat for food, and his employer—the Easterner he had never seen, had denied them the Totem Creek hunting grounds merely to indulge a whim. After all, it meant little to the wealthy Easterner whether or not an occasional deer was killed on his property. But to these people, being able to get a deer when they wanted it meant the

difference between plenty and hunger. Ed felt a gnawing sense of disloyalty at the thought, a feeling that he was betraying people of his own kind.

But was that so?

"After all," he argued. "All the deer aren't yarded up on Totem Creek. They can hunt north and east. Venison isn't hard to get. It's only that they're used to getting meat over Totem Creek way. Well, I'll have to make 'em see they should give Totem Creek a rest and work over new country. And I got to do that as decent as I can. Won't be any police mixed up in this so long as I can help it."

This resolve made him feel easier and as he went on he tried to decide exactly what he should say to Mr. Strowli. Independence would not let him appeal to the settlement manager.

He was not coming to ask for help. If the poaching continued, his instructions from Mr. Allan left him no choice but to get evidence and then turn the case over to the police for prosecution. What he must make Mr. Strowli see was that it would be for the good of both parties to have no further despoliation of the Totem Creek reserve. The manager must be urged to make the settlers see that it would be to their advantage to hunt outside the sanctuary.

After a fifteen minute walk Ed glimpsed the blue waters of the cove through the standing timber ahead. On the way along the path he had

passed great piles of cedar bolts ready to be dumped into the flume. Several times he heard the sound of men at work in the woods, but neither he nor Derry saw anyone until they reached the end of the flume and were working their way along the shore toward the cabin which nestled by itself in the shade of the big cedars.

Derry was the first to recognize the man standing in the doorway, and as Ed advanced with a "Hello, Mr. Strowli," he halted and stood eyeing the big man with a fixed, uncompromising stare. By both sight and scent he knew this was the man who had come so furtively to the pond and who had threatened him at the time the big trout had escaped.

At first Ed did not notice the terrier's strange manner. He was glad to have found Mr. Strowli at home and Strowli on his part seemed pleased to meet Ed again.

Derry watched the two humans move to the bench built against the log wall just outside the door and sit down. He saw the pleasantness leave his master's eyes as the evidence of poaching was mentioned, and was quick to note the change in Ed's tone when the manager promised to make it clear to everyone in the settlement that further poaching meant trouble.

"I kinda thought you'd see it that way," Ed was saying when, chancing to turn his head, he saw Derry had not followed him to the bench. The

Airedale's hostility both puzzled and annoyed him. "Forget it," he ordered. "Come on over here and get acquainted."

For all the effect they had on Derry, the words might as well never have been spoken. Not a turn of his head, or a flick of ears showed that he had heard. Instead he continued to eye the big man with unmistakable dislike.

Ed flushed.

"Are you going to be sensible, mister, or do I have to drag you? Come here when I tell you."

Derry knew every inflection of his master's voice so well that he understood this was the final warning. He came slowly, not with any hint of apology in set of tail or ears, but like a dog forced to disregard his better judgment. Ed was relieved.

"For the minute he had you mixed up with somebody else, I guess," he told Strowli. "Pretty happy-go-lucky sort, really," he added, laying his hand on Derry's head and stroking him behind the ears with slowly moving fingers.

At the quiet reproof in his master's tone Derry's tail went down. His master's outspoken anger never affected him so deeply as could soft reproach. He knew of no wrong he had done, and yet the touch of Ed's hand and the sound of his voice sent a shiver of misery through the muscles of shoulders and flanks.

Ed mistook his changed manner for contriteness. But though Derry's head was low, a dour

determination showed in his eyes and the set of his bewhiskered jaw.

"Not seeing people for weeks perhaps makes him suspicious of all strangers," Stowli suggested. "Going to make up now aren't you?" he added and reached down to pat Derry.

The big hand never reached Derry's shoulder. Like a flash the black lips lifted, and springing back, his teeth clipped together in angry warning. "I'll obey my master, but don't you dare lay a finger on me," Derry's blazing eyes as good as said.

"Tricky, eh?" Stowli exclaimed hastily. "First treacherous Airedale I ever saw."

"He isn't treacherous. Only—"

"Only what?" Stowli asked with curious directness.

"It's like I say. He must have got you mixed with somebody else."

"Well all I can say is, don't let him make that mistake with some of these settlers. They don't understand dogs the way I do and one false move like this would finish him."

"What's got into you anyway?" Ed demanded of Derry who had backed away to the corner of the cabin.

Derry looked over his shoulder. His eyes were clouded, not with appeal or abject terror but with questioning bewilderment. He was positive that this big man was not to be trusted. What

Strowli said could not change the truth as Derry knew it. This was the man who had lurked in the bushes and watched Ed before their first meeting at the Indian village. This was the man who had come like a thief into the big flat and who, resenting discovery, had threatened him with a club. Ed treated him as a friend, but in the Airedale's staunch heart there could be no compromise with a known enemy. To fight for his friends and defy his foes, this was the terrier's simple creed. And as he sat there in disgrace he gave no hint of relenting. Even the bitter realization that Ed thought he had done wrong could not make him ignore what he knew to be the truth.

They left the flume path and were well along the winding trail to the top of the ridge before Derry's buoyant spirits reasserted themselves. Since they had left the cove he had walked moodily at Ed's heels, but now he knew they were entering home country. Gradually his head came up, his tail lost its unhappy droop and he trotted past Ed with a quick upward glance which meant that on his part, at least, there was no hard feeling over their misunderstanding. Ed was almost through the ravine at whose south end he had placed the notice when Derry gave signs of having picked up an exciting scent. Ed saw him swerve and scurry up the steep bank.

"He's picked up something hot," Ed was thinking when he heard Derry break into clamorous

barking. Ed did not lose a second in scrambling up the bank. He knew barks of that particular pitch meant "Get here as quick as you can."

Through the trees ahead Ed glimpsed a sight which filled him with anger. On the moss a man was bending over the body of a deer. Even as he cleared the top of the bank he saw the hunter look up sharply. Ed saw Derry racing out of the brush farther down the slope and at his side ran an animated black and white form which Ed instantly recognized at Bo's. Ed halted and through the dappled sunshine and shade of the trees he saw Benson stand beside the deer and face him.

The set of the veteran's mouth told Ed that they were meeting as opponents. It had all happened so unexpectedly that for a second or two he was left wondering how to begin. But Benson spoke first.

"Right on the job, eh—pussy-footin'?" he accused harshly.

The words stung Ed. From their first meeting he had been ready to give his friendship to this man, and to Ed Sibley there were no reservations to such a gift. He was the kind who did not make friendships easily, but when he did no demand was too great for his loyalty. And now Benson's angry phrase had put an end to all that. Ed struck his light ax into a fallen log and strode forward. They were face to face now. The slain deer lay between them.

"An' you're right on the job poaching. But don't figger you're going to get away with it."

Benson's lips curled contemptuously. From the corner of his eye Ed could see the two terriers trotting jauntily toward them, seemingly ignorant of the quarrel between their masters.

"What can y' do about it, fella?" Benson drawled.

"You know what I can do about it. Only you and some more figgered I wouldn't go through with it. Either that or you thought you could pull a lot of this stuff and me never know it. All right. I'm here to say you can't."

"Listen here. There isn't anybody going to stop us from living off the country. Do you think we're going hungry because some overfed millionaire back east grabs off land he can't use, and hires somebody to keep the deer for him to come and look at about once in five years? You knew what the layout was before you left Vancouver. I gave you a tip, but you wouldn't listen."

"A fat lot you said that made sense," Ed retorted.

"I said as much as I could. Didn't expect me to say right out what was going on, did you? You heard enough to put you wise."

While he was speaking, the two dogs stood perplexedly near the head of the deer. They had come up the slope, panting, grinning their boundless delight at the meeting. Their recognition had come

instantly and for the past several minutes they had been romping hilariously. But now their tails ceased wagging. They looked at each other then at the set faces of the two humans. But so real and wholesome was their liking for each other that, in spite of their loyalty to their masters, they showed no inclination to share in the dispute. Bo stood up; they touched noses and then, as if remembering matters which needed their attention, they set off, shoulder to shoulder, down the slope. Had either Ed or Benson been in control of himself he must have felt the rebuke in what the dogs had done. But, swayed by passion, they took no notice.

“To hear you talk, a person’d think all the deer in the country were coralled on the Totem Creek sanctuary,” Ed declared scornfully.

“Pretty near are. So far’s we know it’s the only sure hunting ground anywhere near. None of us are sharks at hunting and we got to go where the most deer are.”

“You got to locate other hunting grounds, that’s what you got to do. You think I’m going to shut my eyes to this?” And Ed pointed to the deer.

“If you’d brushed out your survey lines you’d know this deer was dropped a quarter mile north of your boundary. But that don’t make any difference. Why? Because I’m going to get deer for myself and my friends along Totem Creek just

the same as I been doing. Don't think I'm bluffing," Benson ended savagely.

In spite of his anger Ed felt a reluctant relief at hearing they were north of the sanctuary boundary. Not that it made much difference. Benson was determined to violate the sanctuary in future and he, Ed, was just as determined to make him pay the penalty of it. Now or later, whenever the crisis came, Ed was ready. There would be no turning back, no closing his eyes to evidence, no double crossing of the man who was paying him his wages.

"That boundary line'll be blazed out. And if I find you on the south side of it you can blame yourself for what happens," he promised. Then turning, he picked up his ax and started for the trail.

It was with reluctance that Derry left Bo and went back to the trail in obedience to Ed's whistle. For weeks at a time Ed's company was all he needed, and then, as today, he would find that the companionship of another dog had become a real need with him. Often he missed old Mac, his big comrade who had been left in the Twin Forks country. And, though their natures were different, there was something in Bo's straightforward manner which reminded him of the sled dog he loved. So, as he flashed across the sun-splashed moss and crashed through the brush down the bank to the trail, a resolve was forming in his mind. This parting was not like the one in the city, and somehow Derry knew that he could find the wire-haired terrier again.

But during the following days, Ed found the prospect of another meeting with Benson and his dog nothing to look forward to. He was not the officious sort. In his roving life he had undergone enough of conflict to place a true value upon peace. Here in this great valley he had hoped to find it. And instead he found himself upon the threshold of a feud. The fact that it could not honestly be avoided brought him little comfort.

And by the fulfilment of those laws which work

so strangely in the wilderness—those laws which men call chance—it was a creature of the wild which launched Ed into the feud he wanted to avoid.

One morning, several days after their meeting with Benson, Ed and Derry were working their way along the side-hill of the valley. Below them a creek ran noisily. Derry scouted ahead. Once when he found bear signs he would have followed the trail hotly, but when Ed examined the tracks, he called him back.

“Likely that’s the old lady we bumped into among those vine maples,” he decided. “We’ll leave her in peace,” he added as he struck up the sidehill again to confirm the direction of a line of survey blazes he was following.

Across the creek, on the opposite sidehill, the old bear felt relief at the lessening scent of dog and man. She left off testing the slow air currents and returned to the small cedar where she had been standing when the first alien scent reached her.

Fuzz, her little son, stood shoulder to shoulder with his frolic loving sister. They had been watching their mother, and now both were fascinated by her odd behavior for, during the short time since they had come from the den in the hollow cedar a little way up the slope, she had never done what she was doing this morning.

Fifty feet from them, at the bottom of the slope,

the creek foamed and coiled among its scoured boulders. Uncounted rivulets, each carrying snow water from the rugged mountain side, had brought it into noisy freshet. Only at night when the cold from the serene peaks crept lower and glazed the dwindling snow patches with a crust of ice did the creek's jubilant marching chorus become a lullaby.

During the time since their mother had led them from the den, Fuzz and his sister had grown used to the boisterous sound of the stream. A south wind, carrying the crisp sweetness of the spring, stirred the evergreens. For miles and miles along the uneven valley bottom, the tops of cedars, firs and hemlocks were like the spires and minarets of a great city cleansed with sunlight. And in these green lookouts the south wind awoke a myriad little voices whose crooning chorus was a summons for all faithful forest folk to join in the rejoicing because austere winter's siege was at an end. The south wind stirred even the deep thatch of lower branches so that little winking patches of sunlight jigged and swayed upon the forest floor. But these surprising bits of brightness no longer held the attention of the two cubs.

Now they watched their mother with unblinking attention. There was a ludicrous solemnity about the chubby pair as they observed how she reared to her fullest height against the small cedar and then, arching her back, raked the claws of her forefeet through the shredding bark. Those claws,

grown uncomfortably long during the months of hibernation, grooved the white sapwood. When the old bear reached up again the heads of both cubs lifted in unison as if they were toys manipulated by an unseen hand. Down came the big pads on the cedar; down, down, came the two muzzles of the cubs, and when she paused at the end of the stroke, the two black buttons which were their noses were pointed unwaveringly at her while expectancy showed in two pairs of little eyes.

The she-bear performed this springtime rite several times more. Then she shook some of the moss and wood dust from her rumpled coat. She yawned, then swung her head slowly, testing the scents of the soft breeze again. The strange scent from man and dog had vanished altogether. On the flats around the creek mouth, miles down the valley, there would be no snow, and green things would be pushing their tender heads through the sodden mat of last year's growth. The dullness of hibernation was leaving her and the urge of hunger was becoming more insistent. Nothing now remained of the deer offal among the vine maples. She shuffled up the slope, led the cubs to the mouth of the den then lay down while they nuzzled and romped about her. There was a positive warmth in the air this morning. She dozed a little, regardless of the cubs who squirmed and tussled between her legs. But soon she got to her feet and, with a soft

growl to the cubs which meant, "Follow me," she started purposefully down the slope.

For a time the old bear followed the course of the creek. Its noise handicapped her hearing and exposed her to the hazard of surprise, but she persisted for she knew that creeks sometimes furnished good spring forage and that fish were likely to be stranded on their banks. Lean and hungry after hibernation, and with two cubs to feed, she was eager to reach her spring range. Her pace was necessarily slow but when one of the cubs did not heed her command and fell to cuffing the other lustily, she dealt each a solid spank with the flat of her forepaw. Much subdued, Fuzz and his sister resumed their places close beside her and the journey continued.

From time to time the way led through patches of devil clubs on whose grotesque, spiked stalks buds were already swelling. Sometimes they made detours around windfalls whose tangles the youngsters could not climb. Then unexpectedly the cubs found themselves confronted with a tributary creek. Their mother shuffled upstream a short distance, found a fallen tree which would serve as footlog, and led them onto it.

When he was half way over, Fuzz, awed by the leaping whiteness below him, crouched and gripped the bark with all the strength of his small claws. Then a commanding growl from his mother—and

perhaps a recollection of his recent spanking—nerved him to stand up and follow his sister to the far bank.

The way took them farther from the main stream. Its booming sank to a drumming throb coming faintly through the hushed forest. A quarter of a mile farther on, as they were filing past a rotten log, Fuzz saw his mother halt and sniff. Both cubs stood with legs firmly planted and heads low while their mother explored along the moss-covered side of the log. Suddenly she dealt it a resounding blow and lowered her head to listen.

Encouraged by faint sounds of movement from within, she cleared away the moss and began pawing back the earth and fallen needles which, during the course of many seasons, had been banked against the log. Soon she had a hole started. Throwing her weight to her right shoulder and reaching farther and farther under the log, she heaped up crumbling wood and forest mould. At intervals she would pause, push her head into the hole and give a snuffling grunt of inquiry. When she stood back, her face, covered with wood dust, gave her a look of clownish gravity. As she scooped the hole larger, her small eyes were alert for the mice she hoped soon to turn out of their nest.

The first one caught her unprepared. It scampered away under the side of the log. Her forepaw dealt the ground a tremendous blow, then she

peered under as she lifted it very carefully. Fuzz and his sister crowded in, filled with the excitement of their first hunting. But when the paw was lifted clear of the ground they looked from the spot up to their mother. There was nothing under the paw and mutely they were inquiring "why?"

Their mother returned brusquely to the hole, her ears forward and a look of pleased eagerness on her discolored face. But no more mice appeared. With a philosophical acceptance of her failure, she grunted to the cubs and started on.

After leaving the log, the old bear led the way to Totem Creek which they must cross here if they were to reach the flats lower down. Soon Fuzz was aware that the booming was growing louder. Ahead, down the aisles between the mottled columns of the cedars, he could see the foaming stream. Seen through the dimness under the big trees, the rushing water showed startlingly white.

For both cubs the creek was an awesome thing. Swollen by a dozen feeders like the one they had crossed, in places it was brimming between its raw cut-banks. Its noise was incessant, more thunderous, in pitch. But when they saw their mother regarding it with indifference, and when she struck off upstream to find the big footlog she had used in other springtimes, they trotted stolidly after her.

A brief search of the bank told the old bear that the footlog had been swept away. She went farther

up. From deep in the creek's bed the water-smothered groan and crunch of rolling boulders sounded, and when at the next bend the old bear saw the log jam through which the creek writhed and spouted, she halted and eyed it critically. Then with a grunt to the cubs to trail closely, she went on and found a log on which it was possible to gain the other bank.

Hoisting herself up she tested it with her weight, looking from where its under-scoured stump lay in the wash of the bank to where its top rested on the higher bank opposite. Finding it solid, she growled sharply. Fuzz and his sister scrambled up the roots and stood beside her. Then all three started over.

Fuzz came last. Above his sister's back he could see his mother. Seemingly awkward but sure footed as a cat, she moved slowly on, now and then rallying the timid cubs with grunts of encouragement. Fuzz could feel the chilly, spray laden air current which the lashing surface drew down the creek channel. The sound swelled to a cavernous rumble. But this time his faith in his mother overcame all fear. So great was his trust that she would take him back to the solid ground that he had not a doubt for his safety. He even looked boldly down at the leaping water.

And then it happened. As he looked down, instinctive caution made him tread slightly off the center of the log on the side opposite to the one

past which he was looking. A slab of bark, undermined by insects, came loose with his weight. He clawed vainly and had time for only one frightened squall. Then he went under.

Fuzz never saw his mother bound forward, pause only long enough to make sure the remaining cub would reach the bank, and then charge down the shore in a hopeless attempt to keep abreast of him. Brush crashed, willow thickets swayed as if a tornado was tearing through them as she pounded in pursuit. It was useless. The black head of the cub came up only to be sucked down among the spray drenched logs of the jam. Into the open below he shot, then down the smooth chute at the base of the tangle. Swirls caught him, drew him under, then he was swept to the surface and borne swiftly around the bend.

Had Fuzz been an expert riverman he could not have met the crisis more effectively. Instinct told him it would be fatal to try and fight the hard driving water. It would overwhelm him instantly. Instead he must use it to help him all he could. With body limp and unresisting, he did little more than tread water while he was swept around the bend, into the narrow reach between constricting rock ledges and so into the wider, more broken stretch beyond.

Sometimes his little black head went completely under, but he came up each time, blinded by the water. A quarter of a mile downstream a cross

eddy caught him, and he felt his feet touch bottom. The gravel of the sloping bar slipped when he tried to climb out. He sank back weakly, found firm footing and then, with water streaming from his heaving flanks, he tottered to the dry gravel and sank down in the warming sunlight.

For ten minutes he lay stretched out without once moving. Then when the sun had drawn the chill of the mountain water from his body, he stood up and looked steadily, ruefully, at the stream. He whined petulantly, for he was hungry; then, sitting up on his fat little haunches, he sniffed the air as he had seen his mother do. What scents came to him carried no tidings of a meal. On a tall fir stub overhead the bald headed eagle who fished the ponds below whistled. Fuzz eyed it disapprovingly and then continued his snuffling examination of the gravel.

A short time later, while his mother still searched the far bank above the bend, Fuzz, tiring of the bar, sat back, carefully licked the crescent of white fur on his chest and then, as if that had prepared him for all emergencies, he ambled off downstream.

Like all wild animals, Fuzz saved himself from a great deal that day by being incapable of the human error of feeling sorry for himself. Like even the adult furred and feathered folk, when left in their natural state, he was made immune from worry by that childlike faith which knowing

Man terms "brute ignorance" but which even to the animals can be the most sure and fortifying wisdom.

Evening found him more hungry than ever. Once, long after dark, he was circling a clump of small alders when a deer bounded up, its sharp front hoofs stabbing the moss in timid defiance. Fuzz sat up, his forepaws dangling; then the deer snorted and vanished in one clean, swinging jump.

Soon after, Fuzz found shelter beneath a wind-fall and stayed there until the searching fingers of the dawn began unravelling the thick tapestry of night. Then he got up, passed beyond the wind-fall and trudged down the valley. An hour later he heard a strange excited sound. And the sound was bearing swiftly down on him!

Fuzz sat up, waiting. He had never heard the bark of a dog before. The sound ceased and he was about to go on when the soft staccato of speeding paws came from behind him. He whirled in time to see a black and tan animal rush from the brush and make straight for him.

Suddenly aware that he had overtaken the cub, Derry swerved adroitly. The flashing swipe which Fuzz aimed at him did not alarm the Airedale, for he had learned to dodge such blows from full grown bears. Derry began to circle, barking for Ed to come, and at the same time preventing the cub from galloping away into the woods by darting in every time Fuzz turned to run. A moment

later Ed, who had been quietly patrolling the sidehill below the end of the hidden trail to Beaver Cove, came upon the scene.

The appearance of this second creature alarmed Fuzz still more, but he stood his ground manfully, sitting back with paws dangling, ready to deal blows to left and right.

“Watch him, son,” Ed commanded. Then with the utmost caution he began searching the surrounding thickets for signs of the she-bear. The cub began to squall so lustily for help that Ed, who was unarmed, was ready to make a quiet withdrawal if he so much as found a track of the she-bear. At such times mother bruin was likely to charge first and investigate the visitor’s intentions later.

But a skillful examination of the ground revealed the fact that the cub had wandered here unescorted. This surprised Ed. She-bears were among the most zealous mothers in the woods and to come upon an unescorted cub meant that disaster had overtaken the little family. An ugly suspicion entered his mind. He would come back here to try and learn the truth. But in the meantime something had to be done with the unprotected cub. Ed began peeling off his mackinaw jumper.

“Razz him a bit,” he instructed the terrier and then, holding the coat in front of him, he advanced upon Fuzz. A moment later, the writhing and

squealing cub had been muffled in the coat and was being carried quickly away.

Fuzz was still resisting when the coat was unwrapped and he kicked loose only to find himself in Ed's new cabin and with the closed door blocking his escape.

"Easy, big boy, easy," Ed advised as Fuzz, now in the far corner, assumed a pose which would have done credit to a heavyweight boxer. Outside Derry clawed vainly at the door asking to be let in to share the fun.

"He'll give you all the fun you're looking for in a day or so," Ed promised as he closed the door behind him and crossed to the site of his former camp. Among a few other unneeded things he had left there was an empty vinegar bottle, which Ed partly filled with water at the spring before going back to the cabin. Once inside he put some milk powder and sugar into it. After shaking it he took a piece of rag from his pack, wrapped it around the bottle neck and came toward the sulking prisoner.

Fuzz fought him, only to be overpowered and have his jaws forced open. Something wet and soft was pushed into his mouth. He wriggled to get free of it and then, having been made to taste it, his hostility vanished. He closed his black lips around the bottle neck and with head up began sucking down the sweetened milk. Ed stood back, grinning, while Fuzz tilted it rakishly with both

paws and drained it with a rapt singleness of purpose which showed Ed he had been many hours without his mother.

From that very morning Fuzz accepted his new surroundings in as matter-of-fact a way as he had the accident which separated him from his mother. He made himself thoroughly at home and with an infectious drollery he soon was inviting Derry to romp with him.

Derry needed no second invitation. For hours at a time he and Fuzz would indulge in mock battles and when the game became too realistic Fuzz would take "time out" by simply climbing the nearest tree from whose lower branches he would glare impishly at the playmate he had outwitted.

When Ed was in camp, Fuzz would follow him about, always on the watch for food. It was this appetite of his which brought him rebukes from Derry every time he became too interested in the food cached inside the cabin. Derry's sudden change to sternness and his warning growls let the cub see that these things must not be tampered with.

During the daytime, when Ed and Derry were away, Fuzz made no effort to leave the little clearing. He wandered contentedly near the cabin, sometimes interested in everything from brush piles to butterflies, sometimes drowsing in the sun.

"You're a wise little duffer," Ed told him one night. "If only you could talk I bet there'd be

somebody over Beaver Cove way would want to stop your mouth. What was the use of shooting your mother anyhow?" Ed thought hotly.

The thought that the she-bear had been killed by a poacher made Ed bitter against the Beaver Cove people. Killing deer he could understand, but to slay a she-bear, soon after she left her den with two helpless cubs, was stupid destruction. Her hide would be useless until she had been active for some weeks, and she would be unfit for food. Like most people who live close to nature, wanton destruction of wild life filled Ed with resentment. To kill for food was one thing, but to kill for the sake of killing was both senseless and criminal.

SINCE he had found Fuzz in the woods beside the creek, Ed had, with Derry's aid, made a thorough attempt to learn what had happened to the old bear and the other cub whose tracks he had seen among the devil clubs near the vine maple thicket some weeks before. There was no other bear family in the valley; of that he was positive. Sometimes bears were killed by rock slides or a gravel slip along the high cut-bank of a stream. A careful examination of the surrounding country had ruled out such chances. Yet he had found no tracks to show that the old bear was still alive. And though Derry had been unable to locate the scene of the kill, the young game warden did not doubt that the she-bear had met her death by a rifle bullet.

This conviction had wholly changed his attitude toward the settlers. Though he would do all he could to prevent it, he could understand why they hunted the deer, and so he had been ready to do what he could to keep the law from stepping in. But now all such tolerance had vanished. He would fight this criminal destruction, and stop at nothing to bring the despoilers to justice.

Summer was fully come and as day followed day Ed's decision to fight the settlers became

stronger. One morning when he passed the mouth of the ravine he found the notice board he had made lying split and broken in the middle of the trail. He said not a word as he picked it up, but Derry, quick to feel his master's changed mood, knew that trouble was brewing.

After that open challenge, Ed decided against the trip he had been planning to the cove. Though it hurt his pride to do it, he had forced himself to see that he should make a last appeal to Mr. Strowli to make the settlers obey the law. Now he would say nothing. If the settlement manager was sincere, it meant that he had not the control of the settlers which he pretended to have; either that or he was half-hearted in the matter. Whichever it was, talking to him could do no good now. Though there were thirty or forty men against him, Ed knew that if he patrolled the sanctuary without fail, sooner or later he would catch one of them red-handed. Then, with ample evidence to convict, it would be a police case.

It was an unfortunate coincidence which brought Benson to Ed's cabin late that very afternoon. With Ed in such a frame of mind the veteran's plan was doomed to failure from the start.

At an open fire Ed was cooking a pot of corn meal, to be divided between Derry and Fuzz, when he looked up and saw the head and shoulders of a man moving through the salmon berries flanking the path from the creek. At the same time Derry

became aware of their approach. He launched a challenging bark and then shot down the trail to hurl himself delightedly at Bo. One look at the strange dog was enough for Fuzz, who scampered to the nearest tree and regarded the visitors distrustfully, first from one side of the trunk, then from the other.

Ed stood beside the fire, waiting.

"Came round from the cove by boat," Benson began. The fact that he had come to ask a favor embarrassed him. His embittered independence made him loathe to ask favors of anyone. He had long ago repented his hostility on the day when Ed found him with the deer, and though he would not do so openly he wanted to make an indirect apology for that. He had come with the hope that the mission he had in mind would not only show Ed how he felt but would also avoid the trouble he knew was brewing between the settlers and this youth. "I'd like to have a talk with you, Sibley," he added awkwardly.

"Yeh?"

The young warden's coolness was making it even more difficult for Benson to explain his mission, but he knew that if he did not go through with it now, there would be no second chance.

"Yes. I wanted to talk over this business of hunting on Totem Creek. I got a notion we can fix things up. It's like this," the veteran went on hurriedly. "Suppose now you and me could go to

that bunch of settlers and show 'em where they could get deer without coming here. That would make things better all round, seems to me. It looks now as if they were in a bad jackpot. What with Beaver Creek drying up and you keeping 'em out of the only hunting ground they know—"

"What you mean—Beaver Creek drying up?" There was disbelief in Ed's voice. Though he had not yet been back to headwaters Ed felt sure that both Totem and Beaver creeks rose from a common source in the big muskeg twelve or fifteen miles inland. There was lots of water in Totem Creek and there should be lots in Beaver.

"No water, that's all," Benson responded. "Not enough to use the flume—and here they are with a year's cut of bolts on their hands. Strowli's playing in luck, all right," he added significantly.

Ed wondered what he meant by that last remark, but he did not intend to ask. Trouble at the settlement was none of his affair. In spite of his hot temper and the bitterness of heart which resulted from his war injury, Benson was honest. Ed knew that. And yet there seemed something suspicious in the plan to have him find other hunting grounds for them and in this fool talk about a well fed stream like Beaver Creek going dry.

While they had been talking, Fuzz, seeing the fun Bo and Derry were having, was tempted to come down and join them. His short little hind legs clutched the trunk of the cedar and, attracted

by the movement, Ed looked up. At the sight of the motherless cub all Ed's resentment welled up again.

"Before we start talking new hunting grounds, how'd it be if you told me who shot that cub's mother?" Ed demanded. "I don't say you shot her, but somebody came from over your way and shot her. An' I want to know who it was."

"Nobody from the settlement shot her. Not one of 'em has shot a bear this spring or summer. I'm telling you."

"You think you're telling me," Ed rapped out. "But I know what happened. That bear didn't sprout wings and fly away. This talk of going to locate new hunting grounds may be a trick to get me off the place so some of your guys can make a clean up. Since that bear was killed you can bet I'm staying right on the job."

"So that's the way you look at it," Benson cut in tersely.

"That's the way. You told me once you'd get venison off this place in spite of me. Seems like the rest of your bunch thinks the same. Folks that feel that way about it aren't likely to change their minds. You wouldn't act decent and lay off the Totem Creek deer Mr. Strowli asked you to."

"Strowli?" Benson rapped out. He spoke scornfully. "Didn't know you'd fallen for his smooth line of talk too. Like as not he's laughing up his

sleeve at you like he is at the settlers. I don't trust that bird any more. He's using you, that's all."

To Ed this seemed ridiculous.

"Mr. Strowli's treated me decent," he stated heatedly. "No use trying to pass the buck like that. You say yourself it's the settlers want the deer. All right. I'm staying on the job to do my dangdest to keep 'em. That's all there is to it. So what's the use of handing me a song and dance about anything else. Up to the time I found this cub without its mother I might have done something about new hunting grounds. But now I'm playing my own game—and I'm playing it hard." He paused and then added with less hostility. "I'm sorry, Benson, but that's the way it is."

"You'll be more sorry before the summer's out. All I want you to know is that, whatever is done against you, I won't be mixed up in it."

For Benson the futile visit was at an end. He turned and limped down the path toward where Bo and Derry were sprawled in the shade, panting and looking at each other with provocative good humor. Ed saw Bo trot after him and jump into the boat Benson had moored beside Ed's among the willows fringing the creek. As the veteran's boat dropped downstream Ed regretted he could do nothing to help, and yet he felt that his decision was the only possible one. He did not

know that before twenty-four hours had passed Fuzz was to show him that part, at least, of his distrust of the settlers was unwarranted.

When he saw the youth spread the corn meal mush on a cedar shake to cool, and heard his "Come and get it, young feller," Fuzz left his perch in a scrambling rush. He ran to the feeding place, throwing his hind quarters ridiculously high at each short leap. When the last of the meal was devoured he held the shake in his paws and licked it thoroughly. Then, without so much as a glance at Derry, he shuffled into the brush heap he had chosen for a den and lay down.

Until dusk Ed busied himself about the cabin. He was thoughtful. In spite of his disbelief, Benson's hinted suspicion of the settlement promoter occupied his mind.

"Mr. Stowli's a smooth talker like Benson said, but that's no reason for thinking he's not on the level," Ed reflected. "Mebbe he's a bit easy-going. But so far's I can see he's shot square with me. Anyhow from now on I'm not having any more dealings with that outfit than I have to. Come on Derry, let's take a walk up the crick."

Later in the evening, when Ed and Derry returned to the cabin, Fuzz no longer slept. He heard them coming through the dusk, but he did not run out to greet them. Instead he sat among the branches of the brush pile as motionless as if he was purposely hiding from them. He heard the

door shut. The yellow light of a candle shone briefly through the unchinked logs of the wall and then the stillness of the night was complete. The murmur of the creek seemed to become louder. Once from out above the alder flat came the throaty booming of a belated mosquito hawk. Slowly Fuzz climbed out of the brush pile and sat watchfully upright.

As on recent nights he was aware of a vague discontent, of restlessness, of little voices calling—little voices which found an answer somewhere deep within him. Here at the cabin was food and security, but each night carried an unsettling magic which took him from his bed of moss and made him prowl uneasily along the fringe of forest, deep in which the little voices whispered to him. And yet each morning would find him back at the cabin, thumping the door either to demand food or to invite Derry for a romp.

A strange conflict had waged in the heart of the cub during the past week, a conflict which he could feel but could not understand. And yet in spite of safety and good food the bond which joined him with the past of all his kind was nightly growing more compelling.

Late that night, hours after Benson had gone, Fuzz stood in front of the cabin, sniffing the cool breeze from up the valley. As he stood there motionless, uncertain, the full moon began to rise, like a balloon of cold fire, above the eastward

ridges. Down the slopes its light flowed in a slow tide. The stumps and mounds in Ed's little clearing became black islands in the spreading sea of silver. The tree branches, like the hands of giants condemned to earthbound immobility, reached in vain to hold the pure sphere of moon, but it eluded their grasp and floated clear. Then, as if some one had actually called to him, Fuzz crossed the shadow of the cabin and made his way over the rough ground toward the woods which showed in a black and towering wall.

Once, uncertain of the unspoken message, he stopped as if listening, waiting for its soft command. Then, reassured, he continued toward the edge of the deep woods.

He looked and thought he saw something black and bulky detach itself from the solid darkness a little way ahead. He stopped again and this time he saw it rear up, taller than before. A low sound, gruff, throaty, but a sound like no other in the world, reached him. His questioning whine floated back through the rich hush of the night. The big shadow sprang forward and a moment later Fuzz, wild with joy, was nuzzling his mother's face.

Abruptly the old bear started back into the woods, but this time, instead of leading, she made him go in front, placing herself between him and the moon-bathed cabin silhouetted against the tree shadows across the clearing. A guarded command rumbled from her throat, and the second

cub came from the place where she had hidden it. And Fuzz, though he was leaving Ed's tempting food and Derry's companionship, did not so much as look behind. Back there lay an easy existence, but ahead lay Life, and he pressed on to meet it in the cool indistinctness of the forest.

Next morning Derry circled the clearing while Ed cooked breakfast at the fireplace in front of the cabin. After ten minutes' scouting the Airedale returned and stood perplexedly regarding Ed. He succeeded in catching his master's eye and looked from him to the brush pile which both knew was Fuzz's resting place.

"Can't locate him?" Ed asked. "Take another *nannich*. Bet he's up a tree giving you the horse laugh."

But a few minutes later when Derry barked at the edge of the woods, Ed knew it was not Fuzz he had found. Drawing the bacon to the extreme end of the fire to simmer more slowly, he went to where Derry was rushing excitedly back and forth. Ed saw him untangle the trail he had been working on and start away, straight up the valley bottom. He shouted for the excited dog to slacken pace and when he overtook him, several hundred yards east of the clearing, he himself saw what the Airedale had been following. On the wet sand of a little bar in the creek were the tracks of three animals travelling together.

"Fuzz, his twin and the old lady!" Ed ex-

claimed. "She was ranging round somewheres all the time and I never ran across her. Benson was right."

Benson was right! It was that, even more than his satisfaction in knowing Fuzz had found his mother, which occupied Ed Sibley's thoughts that day. If he had never found Fuzz or if the old bear had taken the cub away before Benson's visit, everything would have been different. Although his failure to solve the mystery of the old bear's disappearance had been natural enough, at the same time he blamed himself for having jumped to the conclusion that she had been shot—even though that was what older woodsmen would have thought. When Benson came he had not suspected his honesty. But Ed had thought that his absence from the sanctuary was a chance which less honest settlers would have taken advantage of. If he had gone to help the veteran find other hunting grounds it might have still been possible to settle the dispute peacefully.

"But the way things look now, it's too late for that," he told himself. "Son, there's one thing we got to do right soon," he said to the Airedale. "You and me's got to go over to the cove and tell Benson I was wrong about that bear. Spite of everything I can't help liking Benson. Day after tomorrow we'll go."

Ed would have gone the very next day but during a recent patrol of the big flat he had seen a

marsh hawk sweeping low over the little beaver meadows frequented by young grouse and waterfowl. If the hawk kept on hunting these half-grown birds it should be got rid of without delay. Therefore before sun-up Ed was on his way through the flat alone. He had left Derry tied up at home, because, unless he was watched constantly, the Airedale could not resist the temptation to chase the coveys of young grouse. Though they could easily elude him, such a disturbance on the meadows might prevent Ed from observing closely just what the marsh hawk was hunting. It might only be killing field mice after all, and in that case the winged huntsman would be allowed to go free.

It was mid-afternoon when Ed returned. As he came into the clearing he expected to hear the Airedale's welcoming bark. But no sound came from the front of the cabin where he had been tied.

"Funny for him to be sleeping as heavy as all this," Ed found himself thinking. Still he suspected nothing.

But when he reached the door a sudden overpowering fear gripped him. The leash had been cut with a sharp knife and Derry—whom he treasured most in all the world—had vanished!

THERE was no sleep for Ed Sibley that night. In the failing light it was hopeless to look for tracks which might tell him how Derry had been made away with. He knew there was little he could do, yet he made a "bug" lantern with a candle and a five-pound lard pail and ranged up the valley as far east as the ravine trail. Later, when the waning moon rose, he took the boat and went downstream, past the mouth and over to the deserted Indian village. Futile as the trip seemed, anything was better than remaining at the cabin.

"One sure thing," Ed thought as the boat moved through the eerie shadows of the overhanging boughs. "Derry wouldn't go without putting up a fight." His failure to find signs of a struggle at the cabin door had filled him with a chilling suspicion of the means the thief had taken to overpower the Airedale. Had Derry been maimed, had he been killed outright and his body taken away in order that his fate would remain a mystery?

Through the gateway of evergreens Ed could see the waters of the cove. At the creek mouth the tree shadows trembled and undulated upon the rippling water. The cove was silent; not even the crisping murmur of wavelets on its beaches broke

the dead silence of the place. Ed turned the boat into the shadows along its eastward side and rowed quietly to the village. As he had done on the way down the creek, he stopped often and listened, his ears straining to catch the far-off bark of the comrade he sought. But he listened in vain.

With no clear notion of why he came, he went ashore and walked through the village, past the midden heap where Derry had amused himself on the day of their arrival, past the ruined potlatch house and out to the beach beyond. He even went along the shore for a mile or more until he had turned the point and could see for miles down the inlet. Once he fancied he heard, miles off, the cough of a gas-boat engine. But he could not be sure and when the sound did not come again he retraced his steps to the boat. On the way up the creek he went ashore several times to feel his way along the unblazed paths which Derry sometimes took. Though he knew it would probably be useless, he felt that it might help if the dog should chance to find evidence that his master was seeking him. A picture haunted Ed; a picture of Derry, maimed and broken, trying to drag himself home. Ed's fresh tracks along the way might give him strength to continue the weary struggle.

From the very first Ed had been positive that Derry's disappearance was due to the trouble brewing at Beaver Cove. But if some one from

the cove had stolen him, Ed had reasoned that they would not likely take him there.

“They’d figger I’d go there first shot,” he argued. “If Derry’s alive he’s being held somewhere else. If he’s not alive, well—. Benson told me to look out for trouble, but I never thought any of ’em was *cultus* enough to take out their spite on a dog.”

By the time he moored the boat below the cabin, the moon was paling before the strengthening daylight. Knowing he had a long hard day ahead, Ed kindled a fire and made breakfast. The morning air was chill and, as he sat close to the small blaze, munching bannock and with his coffee mug in his hand, he studied every inch of the hard packed ground near the door. There hung the end of the leash where it had been cut. No claw marks showed on the wall or ground, no imprint of a human foot other than Ed’s own. Derry’s disappearance was as deep a mystery as ever.

But Ed had decided what he must do that day. He was going to see Benson. In spite of the way the veteran had opposed him, Ed knew that he at least would never be a party to this crime. No man who loved a dog as Benson loved Bo would have anything to do with making away with the Airedale. Ed was ready to expect anything of the rest. Even Strowli, for all his seeming friendliness, had not impressed him as being so reliable. The promoter’s easy promises to keep the set-

tlers off the sanctuary had not been fulfilled. No doubt he had found it more convenient to close his eyes to what had been going on. That, of course, was his own affair, but Ed could not help thinking the less of him for promising aid and then not seeing it was given. Besides, in spite of Ed's skepticism, Benson's remark, "I don't trust that bird any more," had had its effect.

An hour later as Ed went down the trail from the low ridge into the bottom where Beaver Creek lay he had still failed to see signs of the trail having been traveled the evening before.

"I'll walk along the flume path till I meet somebody that'll tell me where Benson's place lies," he decided. "Sure to be some of the outfit unloading bolts."

As he neared the bed of the little stream a sense of strangeness, of something lacking, came to Ed. He stopped, wondering what was wrong. And then he realized that the stream was silent. When he came in sight of it he was amazed to find it had dwindled to the merest trickle.

"I'll be dinged!" Ed told himself. "I mind now Benson said water was low, but I never figured it would be as bad as this." He mounted the far bank to the flume path and was astonished to see that the flume was dry.

"I never saw the likes of this before," he thought as he started down the path. A creek which had its source on a bare sidehill, or one

whose headwaters had been ravaged by a forest fire would dry up in summer. But Beaver Creek rose in the same area as Totem Creek. Totem Creek still carried a strong flow. Beaver Creek was much smaller, of course, but even so it was most unnatural for it to have dried up like this.

As he kept on down the flume, Ed began to realize how serious a matter this water shortage would be to the settlers. At intervals along the flume stood immense piles of shingle bolts which had been dragged out of the woods, in most cases without the aid of horses. There they stood, telling monuments to the determination of these newcomers to create homes for themselves in this fertile valley. Delivered at tidewater they were worth about ten dollars a cord. Back here in the woods they were of no value. Much of their time and what little money the settlers had saved had been spent on building this flume to get the bolts to where they could be marketed. And now the water had failed them!

Ed was half way to the cove before he heard or saw anyone. This too was strange. During his last visit the sounds of felling axes, or the blows of sledges on splitting wedges had echoed through the woods. Now no one seemed to be at work. Then, as he was on the footplank where the flume crossed a gully, he saw Mr. Strowli come out of the woods and start toward the cove. Ed called to him.

The manager turned in surprise; then, recognizing Ed, he waited until the youth overtook him.

"I'm looking for Benson," Ed said at once. "How do you get to his place?"

Strowli considered a moment. Then he said:

"Better come down to the cove with me, Sibley. Benson may be there. I know for a fact he's not at home. I've just come from his place."

Knowing from what the veteran had said that he and Strowli were not on good terms, Ed was surprised that the manager had been to call on him. But he said nothing. He did not even mention Derry's disappearance, feeling that, until he had talked with Benson, nothing was to be gained by it.

"You noticed the creek?" Strowli asked soberly as they started on together.

Ed said he had.

"Dry. And I would have bet my last dollar Beaver Creek was good the year round. Does it look to you like a creek that would dry up?"

"Sure doesn't. I don't understand it."

"Nor do I. But there it is. We're in a bad jam over here, Sibley, a mighty bad jam. I want to talk to you about it when we get to my cabin."

Ed was mystified. What could the drying up of Beaver Creek have to do with him? What did the promoter think he could do about it?

When they reached the end of the flume, and

struck along the path to where the cabin stood among its cedars, Ed was still more surprised to see the settlers standing about in groups waiting for Stowli. Some were unshaven and in their toil-stained overalls; others had cleaned up and shaved as if in readiness for some important gathering which had been planned beforehand. A little way off Ed saw a few women, some bare-headed, others with shawls on their heads. One of them held a baby against her shoulder.

As the manager came up the slope to the cabin, talk ceased as the men waited for him.

"I've called a meeting to talk over what's to be done," Stowli explained to Ed. "Afterward some of us planned to go over and see you."

Ed was aware that most of the men were regarding him suspiciously, a few even with undisguised hostility. He looked for Benson but the veteran was nowhere in sight.

"Benson here?" he asked the settler nearest him. The man gave a grunt which Ed took to mean "no." His angry manner suggested that it was a good thing for Benson that he was not there.

Ed touched Stowli on the shoulder. They were in front of the cabin now, close to the open door.

"Benson isn't here," he said. "You don't know where to find him so I guess I'll be dangling. All this water business is nothing to do with me."

With the eyes of the crowd on him, Strowli's manner changed like a flash.

"It's got a lot to do with you, young fellow. What do you say, men?" he called out, "he says the water shortage means nothing to him."

"He'll learn better," the nearest man threatened. "Keep him here, boss, till we get what we want."

"Don't be foolish now, and make any false moves," Strowli whispered. "This bunch is desperate. Get inside the cabin and wait till I talk to 'em."

"Is that an order—or just some cheap advice?" Ed asked. Though furiously angry he was trying not to show it.

Strowli whirled on him.

"It's an order," he bellowed.

The crowd surged forward. These men were ready for anything and, knowing their hostility, Ed saw he must wait until he had a fighting chance of success before trying to get clear. He knew now that he had been a fool ever to trust Strowli and, in this one revealing instant, he saw the insincerity behind all the promoter's dealings with him.

"What you want?" Ed asked as he backed slowly into the doorway. Though he had not one friend in the crowd he was far from being intimidated. Besides, whatever the reason for this feel-

ing against him, it made him feel sure that some of these very people knew what had become of Derry. He must find out all he could about that before trying to get clear.

Strowli turned on him.

“You’re in charge of that Totem Creek property. He showed me a letter saying so,” he added to the men behind him. “All right. You’ve got to help us now.”

“If you don’t we help ourselves,” a voice interposed.

“You’ve seen how we’re up against it for water. There’s no money come in since we located here. We’re cornered and we’ll have to lose everything unless we can operate our flume.”

“I can’t do anything about that,” Ed rapped out.

“Can’t you? Your creek has a good flow. We plan to pull out the upper half of the flume and lay it along an easy grade I’ve located to tap Totem Creek a mile or so above your place. We want your O-K on that—and we want it now.”

“I can’t promise anything, but, before I even try, somebody here has to tell what they know about my dog. He’s been stolen. Till I get him back I’ll buck your whole outfit every foot of the way.”

Even before he had finished, Ed saw by the expression on the face of Strowli and of one or two others that Derry’s disappearance was no news to them. A picture flashed before his mind—

the picture of Derry weeks before, right at this very spot, defying Strowli to lay a hand on him. Derry had known even then that the big man was not to be trusted. At the thought Ed forgot all caution. He whirled on Strowli accusingly.

"Don't stall," he yelled. "Come clean or I'll have the police in here. I want my dog and I want him now."

"Sibley, we don't know what happened to your dog," Strowli began, "And we don't want to be mixed up with the police either. We're trying to steer clear of trouble with them. If those birds come to the cove we're sunk," he added with a gesture which struck Ed as much too theatrical to be genuine. A peculiar suspicion flitted through Ed's mind—the suspicion that Strowli was trying to frighten these people by stressing this talk of police intervention.

"Two-t'ree our people hunting for your dog, all right," a voice from the back of the crowd called out. "But somet'ing happen. We don't know what. Anyhow they don't fin' him." Even as half a dozen voices growled for the speaker to "shut-up" Ed recognized him as the settler he and Derry had met on their first trip along the flume path.

"Never mind the dog now," Strowli was insisting. "We want your consent in writing to tap Totem Creek. What's more we want it right now."

"I don't get the big idea," Ed broke in, "But you're trying to run a great big bluff—and it

won't work. The others haven't been in this country long enough to know better, but you know I can't give any authority like that." He was tempted to add: "What's more you know I understand that too." All the while the strange notion was growing on Ed that Strowli was more anxious to stir up trouble than to come to any settlement whatever.

"In other words you don't give a ha'penny hoot if the whole settlement scheme fails?" Strowli taunted.

Seeing the faces in front of him Ed knew that he did care. Behind the unreasoning resentment written on them he read the fear, the Old-World dread of poverty, hunger and all that these apparitions meant; adversity and want were always lurking in the shadows of their racial pasts. The unceasing effort of the last year had been made in the hope of banishing those shadows for themselves and their children. No toil had been too grueling to win peace and security in this great new land. But now the hope was fading—the shadows were closing in.

In spite of their blunders and crudities they had a genuineness which Strowli himself lacked. The harm they had tried to do to him, the unknown thing they had already done to Derry, had been done through ignorance—not because of some cunning design such as Strowli would be capable of.

"What I can do," Ed found himself promising,

"is to write to the lawyer in Vancouver who hired me and ask him to let you have what you want."

Whatever pacifying effect his words might have had was spoiled by Stowli.

"A lawyer!" he interrupted angrily. "Boys, you know where we'll end up if we begin tangling with lawyers. Nail him, you fellows, while we got the chance. We'll make him give all the permission we want."

A score of men rushed toward Ed. Escape to the outside was impossible. Still facing them Ed backed through the doorway into the cabin. As he got his back to the far wall of the room Stowli crowded through the men who hemmed him in and waved for them to stand clear of the table which was placed before the cabin's only window, a few feet to the right of where Ed stood at bay.

"Rich men like he works for don't want this country settled up—not by the likes of us anyhow," a man shouted. "Make him sign papers, boss."

"Sure, get it in black an' white."

"He'll sign all right," Stowli assured them as he yanked open the table drawer and placed pen and paper in front of him. He was reaching back to draw up a chair when Ed snatched it up, swung it in a half circle and sent it crashing through the window sash. In one sure flashing leap, Ed's long legs took him to the table top and almost before the chair fell among the brush Ed had dived

through the window. He fell headlong among the salmon berry bushes. There was an angry roar and a rush of feet inside but before the first man had turned the corner of the cabin Ed was ploughing up the slope through the tangle. Ten seconds later he was on clear ground under the cedars and was running hard.

He was safe for the time being. But that night while the waning moon flooded the valley with its lifeless, unreal light he was to see the inside of Strowli's cabin again.

MOONLIGHT flooded the tide flat. Foaming edges of surf reached up the sloping sand like fingers which spread and soothed and were withdrawn. Then another lazy breaker would crash, reach forward and vanish with crisping murmurs.

Derry felt lighter of heart now that he was away from the fisherman's shack. He stood on the wet sand and looked back toward the grove of evergreens which marked the center of the little island miles off the mouth of Beaver Cove. The trees were black against the clear sky beyond, a blackness broken only by the point of light from the shack's little window. As he looked back, the Airedale's ears drooped and a hint of doubt showed in the set of head and tail. It was the same unhappy pose he had taken when he had found himself a prisoner on the island early in the day.

A larger breaker sent its edge swirling about his forepaws and in a flash the terrier's manner changed. He leaped back, ears lifted, head wag-gishly low between his paws. He barked challengingly, inviting the wave to try and surprise him like that again. A footstep surprised him and whirling he saw Bo's master approaching.

“Trying to make the best of it, eh?” Benson said quietly.

Derry felt the sympathy in the veteran's words. He stood and looked earnestly up, troubled appeal in his fine eyes, his tail stub wavering doubtfully. He forgot his fun with the breaker and was again aware of the old vague anxiety.

“You'll see Ed Sibley soon's it's safe,” the quiet voice said.

As if he understood that Benson had, from the first, acted out of kindness, Derry touched the man's knee lightly with his muzzle and continued to look up at him. Soon after his master had tied him up and gone into the big flat across the creek that morning, Derry had seen Benson's skiff come up the creek. As the man looked about the clearing to find Ed, Derry had read haste and anxiety in his movements. The very fact that he had ordered Bo to remain in the boat, showed the Aire-dale that something was afoot.

And then from the path leading up the creek toward the ravine, came the sound of approaching men. Derry was the first to hear them and his guarded growl warned Benson that he must act quickly. In a second the leash was cut and Derry, trustful but not understanding, was led to the boat. At first he held back, not because he distrusted Bo's master but because strangers were coming toward the cabin he thought he had been left to guard. The instant Benson got him aboard,

the skiff was pushed off and was carried out of sight just as a half dozen of the settlers appeared in the clearing.

The sight of this invasion had been too much for Derry. In spite of Benson's whispered warning he had barked challengingly at them. Then one of the men sighted Benson in the boat. There had been angry yells to stop, to which Benson had answered defiantly even as he pushed the boat swiftly out of sight.

Once clear of the creek they had skirted the shores of the point and then struck out into the wide reach of the inlet to this island.

"I'm going back to the mainland tonight," Benson was saying. "You'll have Bo for company. Soon's I get wind of what's doing I'll be back. I'll try and bring your old man with me. Won't be much after daylight."

A thin whine, long drawn and lingering, came from Derry. He could not understand the words, but he knew Benson was trying to comfort him in his loneliness.

"Let's walk out to the end of the reef," Benson went on. "I want to see no boat's lying off the mouth of Beaver Cove before I start anything."

Every line of Derry's sturdy body showed his happiness at this unexpected invitation. As they made their way over the moon-bathed sand toward the reef at the end of the long spit which the tide had left exposed, Derry dropped back until Ben-

son overtook him. He knew rivers and their ways, but these tidal waters which came and went so mysteriously made him wary. The tide could swallow the connecting sand spit so quickly and in a short time the reef would be an island around which the tide rip swirled and fought.

But Derry soon lost his watchfulness under the magic of the night. Miles away above the dark line of the trees on the mainland, summer snow on the mountains glowed ghostly and unreal under the moon. Derry wanted to run on and on seeking his master, drawn by the moon's unsettling allure and by the heavy, primal scents which the night breeze carried across the tide flat.

They were on the narrow spit now where the sand seemed less solid than the gleaming breakers flanking it. A barbaric pattern of light and shadow lay on the reef's uneven surface. When they reached it, Benson mounted the highest rock and looked long and closely toward the mainland. To Derry who knew the wilds in all moods from storm to languid quiet, there was reassurance in the night. He and Ed had shared such scenes many times.

When Benson had satisfied himself that the gas boat he wanted to avoid was not between the island and the mouth of Beaver Cove, he and Derry started back to the shack among the trees. The tide had turned already. The strip of sand was narrowing and as they reached the flat stretch

of exposed shore Derry shot ahead to interrupt a night heron at its meal. The gaunt bird flapped upward from the stranded starfish it was eating, its long legs trailing grotesquely, croaking a raucous protest which Derry interrupted with a flippant yip.

"Wish Sibley could see him now," Benson thought.

But when they pushed open the door of the shack, Derry's gaiety vanished. Bo came from his resting place beside the rusted stove to greet him, but Derry seemed hardly to notice. He seemed disappointed, as if he had expected to find his master waiting for him here. Very, very slowly his ears drooped, and without another glance at Bo he stalked to the fire and threw himself down wearily on the plank floor.

Even as he lay there his half shut eyes were on the door, and at the least sound his ears lifted as if to catch the footfalls he knew so well. He saw Benson take his coat and the oars of the skiff and go out after a parting word to Bo. Derry's head sank again to his paws but under his bushy brows his eyes remained on the door which had been purposely left ajar.

By dawn Benson had not returned. The fire in the stove had died, its embers cooling with thin chiming sounds like the ringing of tiny bells. A drizzling rain was falling and, as Derry gruffly pushed open the door with a stiff foreleg and

went outside, he saw that formless gray clouds hid the distant mountains and that, down the inlet, water and sky had merged into a gray expanse across which no horizon line showed. The sea was smooth. The circling ripples made by a flock of scoter ducks feeding above the kelp beds near the reef spread and interlapped as Derry walked slowly along the beach to where the boat had been pulled up. There he stood staring fixedly toward the hidden mainland. When Bo came cantering up he paid little attention to him. This was another day and still Ed had failed to come.

Derry walked slowly to a hummock of sand behind the row of drift logs and lay down. From his lookout he could see Bo busy among the bits of seaweed the night tide had left as he searched for some breakfast titbit. But the Airedale had no thought of food. He lay on the sand, his head lifted, as if indifferent to Bo's presence. Yet he was at once aware when Bo started over the drift logs toward him. He rose, yawned with heavy boredom and sauntered out of sight among the trees. Some time later when Derry returned to his hummock the little terrier was far out on the tide flat, moving toward the exposed reef at the outer end of the sand spit.

Derry stood on his lookout, watching the black and white form with cold disinterest. All his thoughts focused on his missing master. Until Ed came to him again nothing could rouse him. Yet in

spite of his seeming indifference he now and then gave a quick look toward the shack, as if expecting some one to come from there and order Bo back from the treacherous reef. Then as if to make it apparent that whatever risks Bo took could be no concern of his, Derry sank to his haunches and, resting his chin on his paws, settled himself to drowse.

For half an hour he lay motionless. Then, as sharply as if he had heard his name spoken, his head jerked up. He sprang to his feet and looked seaward. The tide was flooding rapidly. Already the connecting sand spit was under water. The reef was an island. Bo was marooned there and soon the reef would also be submerged.

Derry took a few quick steps toward the shack. There was urgency in the set of his sturdy body. He whined as if in protest at the emotions in conflict within him. But in spite of his misery because he had lost Ed, his desire to protect the smaller terrier was asserting itself again. Then his instinctive loyalty gripped him. The invisible bond between the pair still held and, as if under the urge of a spoken command, he whirled and raced across the sand flat.

Something greater and more compelling than his desire to watch every moment for his master's coming goaded him as his flying paws spurned the wet sand. Again and again he barked as if to call to Benson through the mist. He saw Bo

scrambling back over the rocks, but by the time Derry reached the water's edge a hundred yards of eddying water separated them.

Derry did not hesitate. In the north, along the rivers of the Twin Forks country, he had gained much understanding of the ways of currents more vicious than this. The sullen boils, the white line of foam, coiling like a snake in torture, which lay over the sand spit, warned him that this was no placid sea he had to fight. Westward he raced for a hundred yards, then started toward the reef. Experience with such currents told him he must swim at an angle, not directly toward his goal. So though now he seemed to be headed out to sea, the tide rip was bearing him rapidly toward the rocks.

Once a swirl caught him. Its vortex clutched at his legs and spun him completely round. Closer still to the surface came his grim muzzle as he put every ounce of strength into the snapping thrust of all four legs. He was free of the swirl now and on his oblique course to the reef once more.

As he turned his head and looked down the rip he could see he must reach the rocks without delay. For Bo, ignorant of the force of the current, was trying to escape. Already he was shoulder deep in the water. Once Bo lost his footing there he would be swept off his feet. Derry's legs drove harder at the water, sending him forward with short jerky surges.

He swam straight for Bo now, and then, finding bottom a yard from him, kept purposefully on toward the rocks. Bo floundered out of the shallows and joined him. But a moment later he was headed for the water again, intent on striking for shore.

Derry knew how fatal such an attempt would be. Even he could not fight the rip where it swirled over the shallows of the spit. If they could have got upstream and struck out at the same angle as when he came there would be a chance for them. But the surface of the rocks was now only a few yards long. The reef was on the southeastern point of the island and as soon as they were in the water both he and Bo would be carried past the point and out into the broad reaches of the inlet. There was nothing to do but remain on the rocks as long as they could and wait for Benson to come.

Derry stood steadfastly gazing into the mist which hid the mainland. But no clumping of oars came to assure him that the skiff was returning. Instead there was only the hungry sucking of the rip along the ragged edge of rock. He lifted his forefeet quickly. The water was leaping across the top of their refuge.

The touch of the rising water was too much for Bo. With a defiant yelp he crouched, leaped and struck out toward the island. Derry saw the tide catch him and carry him seaward. Without a

sound but with the deep light of purpose in his brown eyes he forsook his foothold and swam with the current toward the struggling little dog.

Swimming parallel, and with the Airedale slightly in the lead, the two dogs made a forlorn effort to gain the island. But in a few minutes they saw the tip of the point slipping past them. They swung about and headed toward it into the full sweep of the current. For a time Derry held his own. He even gained a few yards. Bo's despairing yelp came over the water to him. Derry trod water, looking longingly at the land and then at the black and white head fifty yards out to sea. Then his uncertainty left him and he struck out toward his friend.

For the next twenty minutes both terriers swam steadily. But there was nothing they could do. Slowly the trees of the island faded into the mist. Bo was beginning to tire. Weariness showed behind the desperation in his eyes. Derry slackened the force of his strokes and drifted shoulder to shoulder beside him. Once when Bo's hind legs could work no longer, his head came up, his hind-quarters sank and he began to settle slowly onto his back as his forepaws thrashed up vainly after the manner of a drowning dog. Derry barked to him and with a struggle Bo righted himself and kept on.

But for the older and smaller terrier it was only a matter of minutes before the end came. He

seemed to know it, for his eyes never left the tan face of his comrade. Had not Derry been there he would have stopped fighting minutes ago, but there was something indomitable, something fortifying in the bearing of the bigger dog. Never had either terrier surrendered, and they would not surrender now. They would go down fighting to the last. Sights and smells and sounds became vague and far off to the exhausted Bo. And then Derry broke into wild barking.

As Bo saw his friend rear up and heard his deep voice ring out he tried to turn in the direction Derry was taking. But the effort was too much and he felt, rather than saw, that Derry was swimming away from him. Then the barks came again, and Bo heard hurried oar strokes. A gray shape loomed beside him and, as it slipped past, his master's hand reached down and lifted him into the skiff. He fell limp, drenched but safe on the bottom of the boat. Benson did not heed him, for already he was turning the boat to reach the Airedale. Derry swam slowly, trustfully waiting for Benson. He knew this man was a friend. There had been words between Bo's master and Ed Sibley which he did not understand, but all the while he had never doubted. Nor did he doubt now that Benson would save him.

Then he too was lifted aboard, and Benson's arms were holding him tightly.

"You stuck with Bo when he needed it," the

veteran exclaimed huskily. "Your master needs a friend now if ever he needed one. I found that out in the night. And I'm sticking with him, see? I'm sticking."

Derry's head lifted suddenly and he licked Benson's face. Then squirming free of Benson's grasp, he touched noses with the weary Bo.

AFTER his escape from Strowli's cabin Ed kept along the low ridge until he reached a point below which he thought Benson's cabin must lie. So far as he could judge, it was somewhere directly below him that he had met Strowli on the flume path. Strowli had told him then that he had come from the veteran's cabin, and Ed believed there might be a chance of finding Benson at home, in spite of the promoter's statement to the contrary.

"Getting me to his cabin when the settlers were there was too good a chance to miss," he argued. "And mebbe he didn't want me to talk with Benson. One thing sure, if Benson was siding in with Strowli and the bunch he'd have been at that meeting. I'm going down and see if Strowli was double crossing me about that same as he was about other things."

After an hour's careful search he found a cabin he knew must belong to the veteran. But the door was locked and there was no sign of Benson's having been there that morning. As Ed made his way back to the ridge he thought he heard shouts on the high ground farther west. Once, through an opening in the trees, he saw a group of several men tramping up the flume path. They were searching for him, but as long as he avoided well-defined

trails he told himself their chances of cornering him a second time were slight.

As he came up the ridge Ed recalled Strowli's manner during the crisis at the cabin.

"More I think of it, more it seems that bird was bluffing when he talked so loud about wanting water. All the time it sort of seemed he didn't give a hoot what I said or did so long as he could talk big and keep the settlers hot under the collar. He was looking for a goat, and I happened to be elected, that's all. What I got to do next is to wait till dark then try to locate that lad who pretty near spilled the beans about Derry. He doesn't seem a bad sort and mebbe he'll talk if I get him alone," Ed decided.

For the rest of the day he kept to the high ground overlooking the settlement, trying to see where the various homesteads lay. Most of them were some distance north of the flume. As soon as it began to get dark he would swing in a wide half circle until he was beyond the homesteads. Then he would work toward them under cover of the night. What happened after that would be a matter of chance. But one thing Ed was determined to do before all others—to learn what they had done with Derry. Until he knew that, it was impossible for him to think calmly about anything.

The sun was low over the northwestern ridges when he started back to his own cabin.

"I'll cook up a good supper and put a light out-

fit and two-three days grub on the packboard," he decided. "Till I work out my next move it might be wise to steer clear of the cabin. A bit of a camp somewhere along the ridge would be safer."

When he had worked his way along the ridge to the ravine trail he listened a moment and then crossed it, keeping southwest along it until he judged himself to be opposite his clearing. The valley was very quiet. He found himself listening for the welcoming bark of the comrade he feared he would never see again, and he dreaded facing other returns to camp with no Derry bounding out to greet him. For Ed Sibley it was a bitter homecoming.

Through the trees he saw the brush piles of the clearing, then the small cedar near the door which had been Fuzz's favorite perch. And then he stopped in his tracks. An increasing column of sullen smoke was rising from the door and the window opening of the cabin. Even as he leaped forward he glimpsed three men running headlong among the brush piles toward the start of the trail to the ravine. They gained the woods and plunged out of sight even as a fourth human form appeared for an instant at the corner of the cabin. It seemed to be headed for the creek. Over fallen logs, through the brush and around windfalls Ed charged in his desperate haste to head off this solitary enemy before he reached the boat landing.

Ed succeeded. Coming to the path at right angles he saw through the bushes the head and shoulders of a man hurrying down to the water. In one wild leap Ed closed with him and as he closed he struck. His fist met the man's neck and it carried every ounce of Ed's one hundred and sixty pounds behind it. The man went down without a sound. There was a clatter as the two water buckets dropped from the limp hands and as the man sprawled on the path Ed's heart pounded still harder. The man was Benson!

"Never thought he'd do this," Ed gasped. Then, seeing the water pails and remembering how the firebugs had retreated hastily, as if they had been surprised in their crime, the truth dawned on him. Benson had not been an accomplice. He had been not on his way to the settlement trail but to the creek to carry up pails of water.

Through the swirling smoke Ed saw the unconscious face below him. It seemed pale in contrast to the disheveled black hair. Wheeling, Ed burst in the door and rushed into the smoke-filled room. Groping through the fumes he seized his pack and what few belongings his hands could find. Then he stumbled out into the clean air. He was half blinded, and it took a few seconds for him to realize that the noisy outburst he was hearing came from the boat landing and that it was the barking of dogs. Ed was starting to run down the path when Derry, disregarding Benson's parting orders to

lie down in the boat, came charging to meet him. He leaped and Ed caught him in his arms.

"What in thunder did you slam me with?" a rueful voice drawled and Ed looked around in time to see Benson getting unsteadily to his feet. "Not that I blame you much—the way things must have looked to you."

"Benson, you're the best—" Ed began.

"Hurry up with that water," Benson interrupted.

When Ed came back from the landing, followed by Bo, and carrying the two filled pails, the flames had gained too strong a hold for him and Benson to do anything. Red tongues were licking through the shake roof and as the draft sucked through the openings, sheets of flame roared upward, casting a ruddy glare against the trees circling the clearing. Ed dragged his belongings well back from the heat and stood staring at the mounting flames. The light and shadow they cast upon his tanned face made it seem even more grim. Then he deliberately turned his back upon the scene.

"Anyhow I can get me another cabin—but I couldn't get another Derry. How'd it all happen, Benson?"

As briefly as possible the veteran related how at the settlement Strowli had spared no effort to increase the settlers' resentment against the Totem Creek sanctuary and its guardian. When there had been wild talk of running Ed out of the country

he had done nothing. Benson had chanced to hear of the plan to steal Derry and use Ed's affection for him to get what they wanted.

"They figgered you'd shut up about what was going on if you knew Derry'd be killed the minute you went to the police. I got here about five minutes ahead of 'em." Then Benson told of Derry's loyalty to Bo and of what must have happened on the reef.

"I had to leave 'em alone on the island last night if I was to find out what Strowli was up to. I slipped into the settlement and heard all I wanted to know. Unless I can put a crimp into him, he'll have what he wants in a day or so. These settlers will have to abandon their homesteads and their thousands of dollars worth of shingle bolts and leave the country. I aim to call a showdown with Strowli tonight. Been sorta wondering, Sibley," Benson hesitated. "You see I need a partner tonight and I need him bad. I came here to ask if—"

"You came to the right place," was all Ed said. But it was enough for the veteran.

They put Ed's outfit in the boat, called the dogs and dropped half a mile downstream. As they guided the skiff quietly through the gloom, Ed could see how he had been trapped by circumstance into helping the settlers—the very people who had threatened to hound him out of the country and who had, during the past hour, burned his cabin. But

Benson had asked for his help and he could not refuse. Besides these men were but the tools of Strowli and what they did was due to ignorance.

When Ed and Benson landed they kindled a small fire and cooked supper for themselves and for the two hungry dogs. Then they pulled up the skiff, covered it with brush and cached Ed's grub and blankets.

As they came down the winding trail on the Beaver Creek side of the ridge the lighted windows of several cabins scattered over the timbered flat showed faintly through the thickening night. Then Benson, who was in the lead, turned quickly and laid a warning hand on Bo's head. "Somebody coming," he whispered. "Saw a light round the bend."

Drawing both dogs into the bushes with them they waited for the light to come closer. But it did not show again and they were about to move on when Benson, chancing to look up, saw a flash-light wink on and off among the trees at the highest part of the ridge.

"What's the big idea?" he whispered. "You ever see a trail off that way?"

"No trail there," Ed whispered back. "I was all over that part today."

They stood watching. For five minutes the darkness was complete. Then slightly higher than where they had last seen the flashlight, a spot of flame

appeared. It spread rapidly until it was rising in a thin pillar, higher than the tree tops. They could faintly hear a hollow roaring sound.

"Touched off a dry cedar stub," Ed decided. He knew how easy it was to set fire to these rotting shells. By ripping a hole in the thin layer of solid wood at the base, the tinder inside was exposed. A match was enough to kindle it and as the heat increased, the flames roared skyward as from a smokestack under forced draught.

"That light'd show miles down the inlet," Ed was beginning when Benson nudged him. The man was descending now. They could see his flashlight flickering among the trees. Ed and Benson went swiftly until they were below where the man must have left the trail.

"Take the dogs and hide in here," Benson instructed. While he crouched in the brush, an arm around each dog, Ed could dimly see Benson waiting on the trail down which the unknown man was coming toward them. The man was almost abreast of them and Ed was wondering if Benson was not going to show himself after all when he heard the veteran rap out an order.

"Drop that light. Put 'em up, Stowli," Ed saw his friend snatch up the flashlight and turn it on the startled promoter. He also saw the glint of a revolver in Benson's other hand.

"Benson! What in blazes do you think you're doing?" Stowli stormed. Derry knew that voice

and, as he had done that morning at the cabin, weeks before, he growled a warning. Strowli jerked his head toward the bushes. "Who you got in there?" he demanded.

"You'll see. He's going to your cabin with us. Get moving."

"I'm not going to my cabin. If you don't put away that gun and go about your business you'll be—"

"I am going about my business. The lid's off, tonight. Everything goes. Everything, you get that? Now walk." And Benson's gun was thrust forward in so threatening a way that Strowli dare not disobey.

When they reached the dry channel of Beaver Creek, Benson snapped off the flash. The darkness was less intense here and they could follow the flume path easily. They reached the cove without interruption and as they went up the bank to the darkened cabin Benson told Ed to leave the dogs on guard outside and to run ahead and get the lamp lighted.

As he went up the slope Ed could see the glowing pillar of the cedar stub on the high ground two miles inland. The door was unlocked and when he turned from lighting the lamp on the table Strowli and Benson were in the room. Benson shut the door and bolted it. Then he delivered his ultimatum.

"I want those notes you squeezed out of every

man in the settlement except me." Benson jerked his head toward the small safe in the corner. "And I want 'em now."

"What notes?" Strowli demanded sullenly.

Benson thought the question so unnecessary that he did not even answer it. "If he'd wanted to market the bolts he could have done it while he had plenty water in the flume," he explained to Ed. "Instead of that he stalled about ordering a tug and scows to take the cut to the mills. Then when the settlers went broke he advances each one a few dollars and gets them to put up their year's cut as security."

"Which is a danged sight more than most men would have done," Strowli contended hotly. "You're a saphead, Benson, but even you know bolts two miles back in the bush aren't worth much."

"They'll be worth plenty when the fall rains start. Oh, sure! You've given them all a hard luck story about having lost everything you had by backing them. They believe you. I don't. Hand over those notes."

"They're no good to you. I'm the only one can cash in on them."

"That's what I aim to stop you doing. Another thing. If the settlers pull out now before they've proved up on their homesteads you can go to the land office and buy them in for a song and get the

benefit of all the clearing they've done. Now, will you open that safe or will me'n Sibley roll it down the bank and into the chuck?"

"I got other papers—" Benson began moving slowly toward him and Strowli did not finish the sentence for he saw that the veteran, the man he had put down as only a grumbling discontent, would stop at nothing. Strowli glared but there was not the least bit of wavering in the steely glint of the veteran's eyes. Strowli realized that the ex-soldier was prepared to go the limit. He turned and twirled the knob on the safe and, when the door was swung open, Benson beckoned to Ed.

"Watch him," he commanded and began sorting out the documents.

"All here," he was stating when a folded blueprint in a separate pigeon-hole caught his eye. He spread it open and, as he read the lettering on it, Benson sprang up excitedly. "I was guessing your game—now I'm sure," he was beginning when Derry's voice sounded the alarm. Bo joined in with shrill clamor. There was a shot and the thud of running feet. Then from the window a gruff voice commanded Ed and Benson to stand clear.

At the door they could hear some one having trouble with the dogs. Then it was burst open and a second man entered, slamming the door behind him.

"Cover 'em," the man at the back ordered. As

he leaped through the window opening Ed stared at him. It was Black Geary—the man he had seen the day he landed at Salmon Point.

Strowli gave an ugly chuckle.

“I didn’t figure I’d need you for this when I touched off the signal tree. Good work. Where’s Tony?”

“Watching the gas boat.”

“Hmm. I’ll need somebody to lend a hand with this one.” Strowli stated, indicating Benson. “He’s got to be put where he won’t talk. You look after the kid till I come back, Geary?”

Black Geary nodded. He helped Strowli tie Benson’s hands behind his back and a moment later he and Ed had the cabin to themselves. As the two men and their prisoner moved away through the darkness Ed could hear Benson ordering Derry to keep clear.

“Strowli’d plug both Derry and Bo tonight if he got half a chance,” Ed thought anxiously.

“No false moves, kid,” Geary drawled, motioning with his gun for Ed to sit down on the edge of the bunk beyond the table.

As he sat there Ed knew that if he had needed further proof of the promoter’s dishonesty, he had it in his alliance with Black Geary. Things were coming to a crisis so swiftly that the burning of the cabin seemed only an incident in the fight. Strowli was playing for big stakes—and playing crooked. Ed knew he had to stand by the veteran now.

There was no one whose help they could count on to lessen the overwhelming odds against them, and it was ironic that the settlers—the people he and Benson wanted to help—were hostile to him.

Ed could hear Derry prowling outside. The Aire-dale's movements showed that he was uneasy, puzzled by what had happened and by his master's failure to appear. There was nothing he could do, and Ed would have given much to have been able to order him away from the place. Yet he dare not attract Geary's attention to the dog by speaking. Besides, if Derry heard his voice, he would increase his efforts to get inside the cabin. If the dog became noisy Ed knew Geary would not hesitate to shoot him.

Sitting on the edge of the bunk, his forearms loosely crossed between his knees, Ed's mind came back to the mystery of the dried-up creek bed. Strowli had convinced the settlers that this was something beyond human power to prevent. In most cases this was true. But Ed Sibley was not satisfied. He knew the ways of mountain streams. During the seasons he had worked for the fishery patrol, he had had to pay close attention to the nature of creeks. And unless all he had learned was wrong, Beaver Creek was not the sort of stream to dry up as it had. There was something decidedly unnatural about it all.

Another thing. If the creek had not dried up, the settlers would have been able to market their

year's cut of shingle bolts. Right here in this cabin, Benson had revealed how Strowli's crooked ends were served by the lack of water. Then and there Ed made up his mind that, if he could gain his freedom, his first move would be to try and solve the mystery of Beaver Creek. Unless he did that Strowli's plot would succeed within the next day or two. And with Geary guarding him, escape seemed impossible.

For at least an hour neither Geary nor the young game warden spoke a word. Outside Derry had settled down to wait. Ed knew that it must be close to midnight. There had been more than enough time for Strowli to return from his trip to the settlement, and once he arrived Ed knew he would have to abandon all hope of escape.

At last Geary rose from his chair at the far end of the table and, still keeping a watchful eye on Ed, made shavings and kindled a fire in the stove. When the kettle began to sing he opened a wall cupboard behind the stove and took out coffee, canned milk and sugar. The ease with which he found these things showed Ed that this was not Geary's first visit to the cabin. Soon the coffee was ready and, after filling his mug, Geary got cheese and hard-tack from the cupboard and laid them on the table.

"How about you, kid. Et recent?" he asked gruffly.

Ed shook his head.

Geary skittered a mug down the table and placed food within Ed's reach. Then he sat down at his end, placed the gun on the table at his right hand and started to eat.

"Coffee's good," Ed commented when his mug

had been filled. It was the first time he had spoken since Benson had been led out, and at the sound of his voice Derry whined coaxingly. Though he knew Ed had not left the place, the long silence had worried Derry. Now he felt that Ed was all right and he wanted to come inside.

“Tell him to shut up,” Geary growled.

“Go lie down,” Ed commanded. Without being conscious of any reason for it, Ed found himself speaking loudly, blusteringly. Derry was not slow to catch the difference in his master’s tone. As far back as he could remember, Ed had always spoken in an even, quiet voice when giving a command. Now Derry felt the insincerity in the familiar words. So he did not obey them, but instead scratched at the door and when it was not opened he barked questioningly.

“Go lie down,” Ed repeated. He spoke in much the same way as before, but this time, though the dog outside knew nothing of it, Ed had a motive for doing so. So long as he kept this tone there was slight chance of Derry taking him at his word. Sometimes in play he would bluster like this, and then Derry knew he was not expected to do as he was told. Though Ed knew the danger to which he was exposing the Airedale, Derry and Derry alone could help him now. Strowli must return before very long, and then it would be too late to try and catch Geary off his guard. Somewhere at the settlement Benson was badly in need of help, and unless

Ed availed himself of Derry's aid now Strowli would triumph. Yes, he must let Derry take the chance.

When Derry realized that the door was not going to be opened for him he charged around the cabin, barking sharply at every jump. Let Ed fool him like this? Not much.

"You going to shut that dog's mouth or am I?" Geary snapped.

Derry could hear Ed's voice and, as he shot along the back wall, he stopped and, rearing up, tried to scramble high enough to look in the window opening. Geary heard him and, snatching up his revolver, was about to stand up when Ed Sibley sprang to action. Bracing his legs against the edge of the bunk, he lunged forward, hurling the table from him. Its edge struck Geary across the stomach. His heels met the bench behind him and as he thudded to the floor he fired.

But Ed had outwitted him. Vaulting the overturned bench he gained the door, hurled it open and plunged out. Derry almost collided with him as they met at the corner of the building and then youth and dog were lost in the darkness.

As they angled down to the shore, Ed slackened pace while he picked his way over the tangle of driftlogs, but once they were on the unobstructed gravel beach below high tide mark, he broke into a run again. The first thing Geary would do would

be to go to the settlement and tell Strowli of the escape.

"We've got to get there first, son," he panted to the dog loping at his side. Ed knew his only chance of helping Benson lay in being able to find him before anyone knew the veteran had an ally at the settlement. But where to find his friend and how to help him if he should find him, Ed did not know.

Soon they reached the flume trail and turning to the right, hurried along it. Where the flume followed the ground level it was easy to travel without a light, but in the deeper woods and on the narrow footplank across the gullies, they were forced to go slowly. Once the branches of a leaning tree almost swept Ed from his feet. Then they were away from the steep part of the ridge and by the soft light spreading from the east, Ed knew the waning moon was rising. It must be well past midnight, he decided.

Twenty minutes later he was abreast of the scattered clearings. He kept on until he reached the junction of the flume path and the ravine trail. Following the latter northward he kept on until in the faint light he saw Derry swing to the right and start along a skid road leading to a clearing. A few hundred yards farther on both Ed and Derry stopped. Beyond the charred stumps, mellow lamplight shone from a window. Something moved along the edge of the clearing and Ed was

crouching lower when he saw Derry start confidently toward where the salal bushes were rustling.

“Ssst” he warned in a low whisper.

But Derry merely gave him a careless glance and went out of sight. A minute later he came into view again and trotting at his flank was a black and white form which Ed at once recognized as Bo.

The little wire-haired terrier came up to Ed and stood as if waiting. Ed looked down helplessly. There was nothing he could do unless Bo knew where his master was and would guide him to the place.

“Where’s the boss, Bo?” Ed whispered, squatting on his heels and stroking the tousled head. The terrier answered with a whine.

“Where is he? Go find him,” Ed urged. Then, as if he understood that here was some one who would help him, Bo moved a few yards in the direction he had come, then stopped as if waiting for Ed to follow.

Ed needed no second invitation. Feeling his way, he skirted a row of brush piles and came unexpectedly upon a path. It was narrow, but Ed could tell by the hard packed earth that it was a much used one. He had not followed it for more than fifty yards when it ended unexpectedly among a group of small evergreens. Ed felt a low bank of earth blocking his way. Going to his knees,

his hands brushed over the ground as he felt for the path again. He found a partly buried timber, reached farther and felt a step leading down. Below him, at the bottom of what must be a door, Bo was sniffing anxiously.

“A root house,” Ed thought. “He’s in there.”

Ed tiptoed down the steps and listened. Was the man Strowli had taken with him still guarding Benson? Was he inside there now? Ed rapped softly at the door. There was no answer. “Benson!” he whispered.

He fancied he could hear faint sounds of some one stirring but he could not be sure. Ed crouched beside Bo, studying him.

“Nope. You’re too wise a little duffer to get me off on a blind lead,” he decided. “Benson’s in there all right.”

Feeling up the edge of the door Ed found a hasp and heavy padlock. He must have tools before attempting to break through here. Perhaps there was some other way. If the place was a root-house there should be a ventilator, a small box with slats on two sides. Scrambling to the roof, he put his head close to the opening and spoke Benson’s name. Below him he distinctly heard a muffled gasp.

The sound alarmed him. He stood up on the roof. Through the evergreens surrounding it he could see the woodshed close to the lighted win-

dow. He ordered Derry and Bo to stay where they were and set out for the shed. Bending low, he worked his way into the clearing. Sometimes he was forced to cross an open place in which, because of the rising moon, he could have been seen from the house. But wherever possible he kept to the cover of the stumps and brush piles. When he gained the woodshed, Ed felt through the gloom until he found himself beside the chopping block. A double bitted ax was standing against it. Although he could have forced the door of the roothouse with less noise by using a peavy or crowbar to draw the staple, Ed dare not search much longer. So seizing the ax he slipped out of the shed and worked his way swiftly and noiselessly back to the roothouse.

Feeling for the crack of the door, he whispered for Bo and Derry to stand clear, then inserting the bit of the ax he wrenched. The staple creaked, gave a fraction of an inch and held. He tried again, this time putting on the ax handle all the strain it would bear. The staple creaked more loudly. In the still night air the sound could easily reach the ears of anyone in the house, and, whipping out the ax, Ed struck the heavy wire of the hasp a slicing blow. Another blow, a wrench and the door swung open. Ed struck a match and found Benson bound and gagged, lying on a heap of old sacks.

Pinching out the match Ed dropped to his knees and drew his knife. Feeling carefully, he inserted the point of the blade behind the rope and pulled the blade toward him. When Benson's hands were free Ed felt for his feet and released them. Benson struggled up, tugging free of the cloth with which he had been gagged.

"Good work, Ed boy," he panted.

As Ed and Benson came up the earth steps Bo, wriggling with delight, pranced before his master. Derry stood looking at Ed, wondering what the next move was.

"Head for the skid road," Benson whispered. But before they had reached the spot where Bo had found them fifteen minutes before, the door of the house opened, and a man they recognized as Strowli stood for a second or two sharply outlined by the lamplight. He stepped out; two others followed and, passing the shed, the three started in single file along the path leading to the root-house.

Crouching in the shadow, Benson reached out and gripped Ed's wrist.

"If they follow us, never mind me. This con-founded leg— You get clear, see?"

Although Ed realized the uselessness of letting himself be taken if the trio overhauled the crippled veteran, he was hopeful that they could get clear together.

“Any short cuts to the crick?” he whispered.
“Once onto the ridge we’re jake.”

“Skid road’s the only way. Too much down timber through the bush.”

Ed touched Derry, then, pointing to the trail, motioned for him to lead on. In this light, the Airedale could pick out the way better than a human.

“Home,” Ed whispered, and Derry’s tail signaled that he understood.

They lost no time in setting out, but when they had gone a hundred yards a shot shattered the stillness of the night. Two others followed closely and at the signal there were shouts from the house in the clearing. Benson’s escape had been discovered!

“They’ll be on the skid road in a minute,” Benson exclaimed tersely. “We’ve got to dangle.” He broke into an awkward run. Ed could see he would never be able to keep this pace until they were across the creek bed.

“This way, quick,” he urged. With a low whistle to Derry he swung off the trail. They were knee deep in fallen branches, then, going on, Ed found the ground clear for a hundred feet until their way was blocked by a cedar stump. The tree itself had been cut into bolts and hauled away. This was the edge of the logging operations. Beyond it the trees stood densely.

“Slow work getting through this,” he whispered, “But they’ll never find us if we move quiet.”

There were voices from where the skid road left the clearing. They convinced Benson that Ed was right and, feeling his way around the stump, he followed Ed into the thicket. Once they were well into the woods the undergrowth lessened, and with the direction of the ridge fixed in his mind, Ed led the way. Though they heard no more shouting both knew that the roads would be watched. When at last the gloom under the trees lessened it showed them they were nearing the flume and creek channel.

Ed saw Derry halt beside the flume path and look back to see which way he was expected to go. Ed pointed and the dog entered the bushes again. Bo followed and a few minutes later all four were safely across the creek bed where the dry gravel gleamed whitely in the patches of moonlight between the tree shadows.

Ed was confident now that no enemies were ahead of them. They were well east of the ravine trail and as they moved quietly up the needle strewn slope Ed congratulated himself that he had persuaded Benson to leave the skid road before it was too late.

They kept on slowly for an hour, then stretched out to rest. Even the dogs must have drowsed for when Ed’s eyes opened the rosy flush of dawn

lay over the valley below them. Benson sat up and ran his fingers through his tousled hair.

"Where do we go from here?" he asked with a wry grin. "Boy, I'm hungry."

Ed got to his feet.

"Let's get over the crest. Then if we're lucky we'll eat."

"Got a cache or something up there?" Benson asked.

"Nope."

"Then why don't we go to where we left the grub last night? One place's as good as another to hide out in."

"Because I want to keep in sight of the crick bed down yonder."

"What's the big idea?"

"Let's rustle a breakfast first. Then we'll talk things over."

Benson, grumbling good-naturedly, stood up, rubbed his leg and followed Ed and the dogs as they angled eastward up the wooded slope. It was daylight when they reached the crest. On their left lay Beaver Creek while down the slope to the south was Totem Creek and the sanctuary.

When the first golden spears of sunlight struck the tips of the evergreens along the ridge, Ed stopped.

"Time for breakfast," he announced.

"Time—and nothing else."

"Mebbe. You get a fire going. No more smoke

than you can help. A nice bed of coals. Derry and I'll go a little ways farther on and see what we can locate."

Ed struck straight down the ridge to where a low bluff overlooked the valley of Totem Creek. He and Derry had passed here several times while he was locating the boundary lines of the sanctuary. And each time they had come upon a covey of Franklin grouse, or "fool hens." They and porcupines were what Ed sometimes termed "the starving man's meal ticket."

When they were close above the bluff Ed waved Derry ahead.

"Put 'em up, boy, put 'em up," he urged.

Derry was away like a flash. He ran up the slope, found nothing and came quartering down. He was almost at the edge of the bluff when he scented something and, rushing ahead, flushed the birds which were warming themselves where the first sunlight struck the moss. They flew leisurely into the nearest small tree and Derry, grinning, looked back to see if his master had been a witness to his success. The grouse looked at him quite calmly. Often they had outwitted roving coyotes or wolves in this way and they fancied themselves safe now.

Derry saw Ed coming down the slope, kicking away the moss here and there as he gathered a handful of stones.

"We eat all right," Ed chuckled. "Stand back

now and give a fella room to swing his arm."

Ed walked to within twenty feet of the tree and then threw a stone at the bird perched on the lowest bough. His first shot missed, but the grouse did not fly. It merely fixed him with one bright eye as if mildly curious about what this strange creature would do next. Ed's second shot brought it flapping to the ground.

Ed knew that by knocking down the bottom bird each time, the ones above would be less likely to take alarm. When he had secured three of them he dropped his remaining stones and started up to where Benson was waiting. Not until he turned away did the covey become alarmed and whirr away into the blue shadows of the Totem Creek draw.

"Thought you'd located a porcupine tree," Benson said when he saw the birds. "But this is a dinged sight better."

Together they plucked and drew the three grouse, cut them into pieces and grilled them over the hot coals. Derry and Bo sat on the opposite side of the fire, their noses twitching and with mingled hope and despair in their eyes.

"Don't worry, lads," Benson assured them. "When we eat, you two eat. And after last night by rights you ought to eat before us, eh Ed?"

Ed nodded emphatically.

"They're a great little team," he said.

When they had all eaten, Benson smothered the fire with earth and Ed led the way over the crest again. They were nearing the top when they saw smoke rising slowly above the trees a mile to the west of them.

“Must be that stub Stowli touched off last night to bring Geary to the cove,” Benson said.

“Must be. Sure was taking chances with a bush fire when he started that.”

“If it did spread it would most likely keep to the ridge. And a lot Stowli cares who suffers as long as the fire didn’t get into the settlement. I heard him and that other guy talking about the scow Geary had towed into the cove last night. He was lying off the mouth with it, waiting for the high sign.”

“What’s he aim to do with a scow?” Ed wanted to know.

“Stowli’s persuaded most of the settlers that the game’s up and that they might as well pull out. A bunch of them will be loading what stuff they have left onto the scow today. By this evening they’ll be ready to pull out for keeps. Once they desert their homesteads Stowli won’t lose a minute filing on them. The other families will soon quit. After what I saw in that safe last night I know Stowli has been working for this for months. Any way he could find to stir up trouble with you or anybody else, he took. So far he hasn’t missed a trick.”

"Why don't you go to the settlers and tell 'em straight out what you know?" Ed asked.

"A lot of good that would do. Strowli has got them believing I'm a quitter and that I'm working against them. After I stopped them from getting Derry, nothing was too bad for me. Now I'm in with you—and you're the guy Strowli has kidded them into thinking has robbed them of their last chance."

"You mean by not letting them tap Totem Creek? That's the craziest idea ever was. They can't get a grade around that ridge without spending a whole lot of money."

"Sure, I know that and Strowli knows it too. But he'll do anything to make them tangle with the police and at the same time keep them from guessing his game. Just the same I'm going back to try and talk sense into some of them today, before it's too late. There's some decent people down there, and what with the women and the kids and all—"

"I guess they're not so bad if only Strowli hadn't put them on the wrong track."

"That's right, Ed. So if you'll sort of back me up down there this morning, why—"

Ed shook his head.

"I'm going the other way today," he stated. "I'm working up the crick. Let's stretch out here for a bit, I want to keep my eye on that dry channel down yonder."

Benson looked at him. He knew Ed Sibley was not the person to avoid trouble, and he trusted him in everything. And yet, in view of what should be done today in the settlement, this heading up the creek seemed to the veteran to be suspiciously like running away.

AFTER the excitement of the night both Ed and Benson found soothing in the early morning stillness. Here on the crest of the sun-bathed ridge the feuds and scheming into which they had been drawn seemed senseless and contemptible. Far inland, glaciers on the towering mountains swam in the dazzling purity of the sun. Northward, ridge after ridge showed as loosely woven lines, some green, some still misty purple where the shadows lay. Westward irregular openings between the tree branches framed the unbelievable blue of the sea. Ed stretched out on the needles, face down, his chin resting on his crossed forearms as he kept close watch on the white gravel patches showing through the trees at the base of the side-hill which marked the course of Beaver Creek.

Derry curled up at his side. Once a flock of grosbeaks swept past. Hundreds of the little birds swooped and twisted in compact flight, then changed direction so suddenly that they seemed to eddy as if they were a cloud made up of flecks of color which some playful gust had caught. From beneath bushy brows, Derry's eyes followed their erratic course. But he was not in a playful mood. Memories of the night's conflict

filled his mind. Down there beyond the slope were men who had shown themselves to be enemies to Ed Sibley and himself.

Ed was about to speak when Derry's expression changed. His gaze down the slope became fixed, alert. Ed leaned toward him to discover what had caught the Airedale's attention. Then he nudged Benson and pointed. Dwarfed by distance, two men were moving up the dry bed of the creek.

"Luck's with us," Ed said tersely. "Time I was moving."

Benson eyed him in bewilderment.

"Don't you recognize them?" Ed asked.

"The leader looks like Black Geary and—"

"The other's his *tillicum*—the one Strowli took to guard you. I thought Strowli'd be sending somebody up the crick now that we're free. Even yet I may be barking up the wrong tree. But if I'm right, and my luck holds, the settlers' trouble will be over by tonight. And if they're out of trouble, I'll be out too. So'll you. What I got to do is trail those two."

"What for? Blowed if I can make head or tail of all this."

"You'll know one way or the other before night. Following them is a one-man job." Ed knew that, with his injured leg, Benson could not make the hard trip inland. "Anyhow," he went on, "You'll be needed here. You say the

settlers will likely pull out with the scow on the ebb tide this evening. That means they'll be working at the cove, near the end of the flume. Keep under cover and watch them. That rock hummock near the mouth of the flume would be as safe a lookout as any. I'll look for you there this evening. If I don't come by dark try to do something to make the settlers hang on till morning. If I've guessed right they'll have all the water they need for the flume before another twenty-four hours—mebbe before another twelve. Try to keep them. I'll come back to you just as soon as I can make it."

Benson got to his feet.

"I'm beginning to see what you're driving at," he said slowly. He knew Ed was going to take a big risk and take it single-handed. He knew that with his injured leg he could never make the trip over rugged country to headwaters. And he knew that, in spite of what the settlers had done to him, the youth was taking their fight upon his own shoulders. "I'll be waiting on that rock hummock. You're a good guy, Sibley," he added with an emotion he could not hide.

With Derry at his heels, Ed travelled half a mile along the crest before he caught sight of the two men again. Taking care to keep just below the skyline he was passing above the torn channel of a rock slide when he saw the pair making their way over the boulders and broken trees at the

bottom of the draw. Ahead, the valley began to flatten out, and he could see the lower end of the immense marshy flat out of which both Beaver and Totem creeks flowed.

“Must have been hundreds of beaver there before the Indians trapped them out,” Ed thought. He knew there would be old dams and dikes running in all directions, forming a maze of overgrown channels which would take weeks to trace. No, any creek which rose in that muskeg would not go dry even in the hottest summer.

Keeping a close watch on Derry, Ed waited until the two men passed out of sight. Then he moved on again, skirting the thickets of mountain ash beyond the slide. Always keeping the advantage of higher ground, Ed trailed the pair most of the morning. It was hot on the ridge, and by noon Ed was glad to see them halt and kindle a small fire.

Ed studied the ground closely. Half a mile farther on he could see where evergreens gave place to the alder and willow thickets of the marsh. He could even see the puddles and stretches of baked mud where the dry creek bed left the low ground and wound its way toward the base of the ridge. This was the best, perhaps the only, way into the muskeg, and if Strowli's two accomplices entered it ahead of him he might find it next to impossible to locate the obstruction he knew must have been built somewhere farther in.

"We got to make a break for it now," Ed decided.

Keeping well out of sight, he and Derry started down the slope which marked the end of the long ridge. A thin column of blue smoke showed him where the men had made their noon camp, and as the ground began to flatten out Ed could see the light green of the alders ahead. His heart beat faster, for he knew that once he entered the dry channel his only sure way of escape would be cut off as soon as the men started on again.

Every minute was precious now. If Geary and his partner reached the block in the channel before he was able to locate it, Ed knew he was helpless. Later, perhaps, he and Benson might be able to make a fight for it, but that could not be until tomorrow at the earliest. And with the settlers preparing to leave the cove, tomorrow would be too late.

When he had run for a quarter of a mile, the soft black mud of the creek bed forced him to struggle through the hard-tack bushes crowding the bank and push his way with maddening slowness farther up the channel. The ground was more open here and, except for scattered clumps of willow, there were no trees to hide him when he stood up.

"Go on," he exclaimed.

Derry knew what Ed wanted him to do. Hurling himself at the dense brush he fought his way on

yard by yard. And Ed swung in behind him, relying on Derry's ability to choose the easiest course. Once Ed turned aside to look at the channel. Though there was no flow in it, the bottom was covered with standing water. A sudden gust of wind swept over the bushes and when its rustle had died away Ed caught the sound of running water. He looked behind him. The men must have finished their dinner. If they intended to enter the muskeg they should be close behind him now.

Five minutes later Ed Sibley knew that his search was at an end. Close ahead he saw two channels winding between the willow clumps. The water was several feet deep in each, but where the one nearest him curved toward the other, a deep trench had been cut through the black soil. He could see the piles of earth and roots. He made for the bank and there, almost at his feet, he saw the reason why no water flowed down Beaver Creek. A dam of brush and willow poles blocked the channel so that all the flow ran through the ditch and into the channel which must be one of the feeders of Totem Creek and which would join it just south of the end of the ridge.

Ed sprang from the bank and landed on the quaking mud below the barrier. He had no tools, not even an ax to help him, but with his bare hands he tore at the brush and wrenched the poles aside. In a minute the water had found its

way through the opening and was helping him widen the breach. It came sluggishly at first. Then, as the hole became larger, the released water sprang to life. Ed floundered aside, still tugging at the straining poles and drenching himself as he snatched at the brush which threatened to clog the opening. Downstream the water raced away, black with mud, its surface littered with floating brush. Then the whole dam sagged as the maddened water underscoured it, Derry gave a warning yelp and Ed scrambled back to solid ground.

"Come on," he panted to the Airedale and, tearing his way through the stubborn hard-tack, Ed fought his way to the cover of the willows.

He was a hundred yards north of the broken barrier before he halted to recover his wind after his struggle at the dam. And as he crouched there the freshening wind from the west must have brought scent of the approaching men, for the hair on Derry's shoulders rose and he growled softly. But Ed did not care now. He had banked everything on being right about the mystery of the water failure. Now he had solved it. It would be days before the barrier could be built again. And, anyway, Strowli would never try that trick a second time.

"Let's get out of this jungle," he whispered. He knew it might take a day before the water filled all the potholes of the creek bed and flowed down the flume. If the settlers got away before

the water came, they would never know how they had been tricked into abandoning their homesteads. Ed realized that if he failed in getting word to Benson, the crooked promoter might still win.

But instead of following when Ed began his difficult detour toward the ridge, Derry struck back toward the creek channel. Ed did not miss him for a minute or two, and when he did he stopped, thinking the dog must be close behind him. He dared not whistle or call out, but, as minute after minute passed and Derry did not appear, Ed's annoyance grew. With Geary and his partner so near them, he must not go on without the dog. And yet every minute's delay might spell the difference between defeat or victory for the settlers and himself. Then Ed's heart leaped. Derry burst into challenging barks and at the same instant a shot rang out over the marsh.

Ed's mouth was grim but there was fear in his eyes as he forced himself to start back toward the dam he had destroyed. Derry's silence increased his dread that the shot had found its mark. Had the Airedale's reckless daring been fatal to him? A picture of Derry wounded, and dragging himself into the bushes to die, flashed through Ed's mind. No, in spite of the settlers, in spite of his own plans to bring peace to the sanctuary, he could not leave the muskeg until he knew what had happened to his impetuous comrade.

He was half way back to the ruined dam when he heard Geary shout something. Then Derry barked and the dog's audacious defiance was music in the ears of the youth. The bark rang out again and this time Ed found himself answering it, shouting for the dog to come to him. There was a crash in the bushes twenty yards to the right of where he was waiting and Ed whirled to find Geary rushing at him.

Things happened so quickly that later Ed could not recall them. Even as he turned Derry flashed past him. Ed dodged, tripped on a grass tuft, fell full length and rolled aside as Geary jumped for him. Derry, snarling, hurled himself straight at Geary's chest as Ed found his feet and crashed blindly through the bushes. Geary was close behind him and then, as Derry leaped at his legs, the big man tripped and fell. Ed looked behind him and saw Derry rush past his enemy even as the second man ran up.

"Derry! Derry!" Ed yelled and the next instant the Airedale was in the lead and Ed was out of sight of his two foes.

Now that concealment was impossible Ed headed straight for the ridge. When he came to the creek channel he plunged in and, as he splashed to the south side, he caught Derry by the scruff and pushed him unceremoniously to the top of the cut-bank.

"I'm running this show. You keep ahead," Ed's

gesture meant and at the wave of his master's hand Derry took the lead again. Ed never knew how far Geary and his partner trailed them or if, after seeing the ruined dam, they tried to overtake him at all. But he knew they had arrived too late to aid Strowli and neither he nor Derry ever saw them again.

Ed's journey westward along the ridge that afternoon was a race against time. When he reached the start of the slope he was tempted to keep to the Beaver Creek level. But with water already flowing down it, he would have had to take to the woods in places. And fallen trees would have delayed him longer than the time it took to climb to the more open ground along the ridge. Besides, having come this way, he had a better idea of what lay ahead. By five o'clock he and Derry passed the place where they had been resting with Benson early that morning when they sighted Geary and his partner in the creek channel.

From here the ridge curved slightly to the south, so that for the first time that afternoon Ed could see some distance along it. The afternoon breeze had died and from the crest down to the flume there hung a thick pall of smoke. The distant cove, the clearings of the settlement, all were hidden by it. During the heat of the day the fire which lurked in the stub Strowli had used as a beacon had spread up and down the slope for

at least a mile. No flame showed and, from the slowly rising smoke, Ed judged that there was not enough heat to stop him striking straight through until he came to the ravine trail.

"Take us an hour to work round it," he said to Derry. "Most likely it's only smouldering in the moss. A few minutes run'll see us through."

When they reached the edge of smoke, Ed struck straight into it. During the first few minutes it seemed as if he was right. "Spot fires," started by sparks carried from the stub while the breeze was fresh, smouldered in patches on the moss. There was no flame, and among these patches he and Derry sometimes crossed places where the air was clear. And then, when they were well into the burn, the slow air currents, which among the hills set in at evening, began flattening the smoke so that these breathing places disappeared. The biting smoke drifted parallel to the ground. It became impossible to see more than a few yards ahead.

Derry was quick to sense his master's alarm. Although he longed to race away and find fresh air to soothe his tortured nostrils and throat, he stayed with his master. Ed, fearing the dog might lose his sense of direction and perish, had told him to stay close. With smarting eyes, Ed sheltered his mouth and nose in the crook of his arm, and kept straight on, fighting back the panic which threatened him. And at his heels came

Derry, gasping and made wretched by the suffocating fumes.

The smoke was thicker now. Even by going slow there was not air enough to supply the tortured lungs of youth and dog. Ed plunged ahead for ten yards, hoping at every step to find himself in air clean enough to breathe. Derry saw him reel, then sink down suddenly and, gasping, press his face against the moss. Derry stood and waited. Ed did not get up!

Seconds passed and then Derry tried to bark. The sound came in a throttled exhalation. Still Ed did not stir. Then Derry, wild with fear for his master, hurled himself upon the body sprawling on the moss. He licked Ed's face, prodded him with his forepaws and when Ed did not rouse himself, Derry seized him by the shoulder and pulled with all his remaining strength as if he would drag Ed bodily from this place where death was hovering. When he saw Ed sway to his feet the dog started on. Ed, still partly unconscious, had lost all sense of direction. Had Derry faltered then or become confused, both he and Ed Sibley would have perished under the deadly pall which Strowli's fire had spread upon the sidehill. But Derry's sense of location did not fail him. Five minutes later they were on the fringe of smoke and at their feet lay the ravine trail, dropping down to cross the stony bed of Beaver Creek.

Only the first trickles of water had come this

far down the creek. Ed staggered up the opposite bank and looked in the flume. Things were floating before his reddened eyes. He could not see. Dropping weakly to his knees he felt along the bottom planking. No water ran there yet. The flume was dry. When Ed tried to get up, trees, path and flume spun rapidly and he collapsed on the path.

The impact of his fall roused him to one last effort. He looked about him. On the stones a few yards away Derry lay where the water was beginning to trickle. His flanks heaved spasmodically as if each tortured breath would be his last. But when Ed spoke his name the tan head lifted and Derry struggled up the bank to him, then sank panting against Ed's knees. With a start Ed recognized that it was not the smoke which had shut out the sun. Dusk had come and already above the flattened V of tree tops down the valley the evening star showed faintly. Ed clutched the lip of the flume and drew himself erect.

"We—got to—" he panted and then his knees gave beneath him and he sank down again.

Time after time Ed tried to stay on his feet, to start down the flume path in a last attempt to carry the news to the settlers before the scow took them away from Beaver Cove for ever. But each time he fell before he had gone a dozen yards. Although he would not quit while consciousness remained, a great and towering fear clutched him

—a fear that he would reach the cove too late. Dusk was deepening, and by now the duped settlers would be ready to start. Perhaps they had already surrendered their rights to the year's cut of bolts in favor of Strowli. Ed stared at the tottering dog beside him. Then with fumbling hands he drew Derry to him and looked deep into those brown eyes.

"I can't make 'er," he gasped. "Ol' boy can you—carry the—big news?"

Behind the pain, behind the misery clouding those fine eyes, there glowed the supreme trust, the unquestioning loyalty which made Derry want always to serve this youth and never to count the cost. In his high-spirited moments he might be careless, headstrong even, but at times like this to do his master's bidding or perish in the attempt—this was his unalterable creed. Ed had his answer. His fingers felt in his pockets and found a pencil stub and a bit of soiled paper, on which he scrawled the two momentous words:

"water coming."

With his khaki handkerchief he knotted this conspicuously about Derry's neck and struggled to his feet. Holding to the flume's edge with one hand, to keep himself from swaying, he pointed straight down the path and told the dog to go.

"Go find Bo. Good boy—find Bo," he urged. "Mush *klatawa*." The old sled-dog order which

Derry had heard on many a long winter trail came unconsciously to Ed's lips.

Derry hesitated, looking appealingly at Ed as if to ask if he could not stay here just a little longer and rest his tortured body.

"Find Bo," Ed gasped. And as he saw the exhausted dog start away in a lurching, swaying run, Ed's throat was constricted by emotion and tears started in his smoke-reddened eyes.

Only once did Derry look back to see his master reeling in a desperate attempt to follow. Then the dusk hid Ed and Derry was going on alone. With head down and forward, with each breath a gasp, the Airedale kept on. He saw nothing but the packed earth of the trail and when that gave place to the narrow footplank he was scarcely aware of the gloomy depth of the gullies he had to cross. This was the trail his master had told him to follow, and he would keep on as long as any spark of life remained.

Derry lost all sense of the distance he had come. He knew that somewhere behind Ed was struggling to follow him. He wanted to fall down and wait, yet he knew he must keep going on. He did not notice when the last light of the day began to show through the trees ahead. The path left the flume and went down a short slope to the left. He followed it and found himself on the shore of the cove. There were voices. Derry sank down at the water's edge. He had fulfilled his trust. He

had come to the end of the trail in search of Bo.

Although he still waited in his hiding place among the rocks above the beach, Benson did not at first see the Airedale. The veteran had been watching Strowli talking to a group of settlers. He had seen the poor household effects carried onto the waiting scow, had watched with despair the women and children resting on the rolls of bedding on the scow. One of the mothers, a shawl over her head, sat a little away from the rest. Her dull gaze across the water was unbroken, listless. Her toil-worn hands lay dejectedly in her lap. Silhouetted thus against the dying sunset, she became for the veteran a symbol of the settlement's failure. A baby whimpered fretfully. Then Benson heard a sharp word from one of the men and turned his eyes to see Strowli standing over something black and tan and moveless upon the beach. With a pounding heart Benson recognized Derry. How or when the terrier had come there he did not know. But there he was and Ed Sibley, the man who had said there should soon be water in the flume, could not be very far behind.

Motioning for Bo to keep low, Benson risked discovery by rising to his knees. He saw Strowli unfasten something from Derry's neck. The unconscious Airedale did not resist and then, after some comment, Strowli and most of the others

turned and started in a straggling group toward the cabin among the cedars.

Benson knew what that meant. He had overheard talk of Strowli taking over the rights to the bolts in the hope of the settlers realizing a few dollars from the wreckage of the settlement scheme. Now they were going to the cabin to sign over all their claims. If only Sibley had come ten minutes earlier! And then Benson remembered the paper he had seen Strowli take from the dog's neck and stuff into his pocket with furtive haste. Benson stood boldly on the skyline and waved to the group.

"Don't sign over anything till the morning, boys," he shouted. "Hold out a little longer."

Strowli spun round. The men stared.

"Fine one you are—you and your cheap advice," the promoter shouted. "After quitting us and siding with Sibley."

"You better hide out if you know what's good for you," one of the men yelled.

"Strowli's been double-crossing you," Benson answered. "He's doing it now. If he isn't, ask him to read what's on that paper he found tied to the dog's neck."

"Never mind him," Benson heard Strowli say impatiently. "Let's do what we got to do. We can listen to his hot air afterwards." Strowli started purposefully toward his cabin.

Most of the group were about to follow when one man spoke.

"Wait a minute," he argued. "If you found a paper on the dog, no harm to show it, eh? What say, boys?"

Benson saw Stowli glance anxiously at the end of the flume.

"I never got any paper," the promoter lied. "I don't know what your game is Benson, but—"

Stowli's threat was never uttered, for from the end of the flume came a long-drawn splashing which dumfounded every one of them. From the flume mouth came a second discharge of water. And then, in a steady, increasing flow, water began pouring down.

"This is a trick," Stowli screamed. "I got nothing to hide."

Benson, with Bo at his heels, came down the rocks and made straight for the promoter.

"Good. If you've nothing to hide you can prove it easy enough. But I say you have. Open your safe and show the bunch the blueprint I saw there last night."

Benson saw the stares of the men crowding about him. And the fear they read upon Stowli's face did nothing to quiet their rising suspicions.

"I got nothing but personal papers in that safe," Stowli blurted.

"You bet they're personal. So personal that the game's up if the boys see them."

"Who are you going to believe, men? I stood by you. He quit."

"Can't hurt nothin' fer us to see," a man insisted.

Excited voices echoed the demand. The sight of the precious water brimming their flume, this last-minute chance to retrieve their losses, swept them on. Strowli saw the game was up. He would have struck the crippled veteran had not a dozen men hurled themselves upon him and dragged him up the slope.

Strowli knew the unreasoning violence of such a mob. To open that safe would expose his plot, but to refuse them now would be fatal. He was in their hands and after they had wreaked their vengeance on him they would open the safe by force. Livid with fear, he flopped to his knees and, after fumbling with the knob swung the door open.

Benson pushed through the crowd and held up the blueprint he had seen the night before.

"Look at this," he shouted, holding it up. The men read:

**"PROPOSED PLAN FOR BEAVER COVE
SHINGLE AND DEVELOPMENT COMPANY."**

"Here's the flume, mill site, workers' quarters. Where are your homesteads on it?" Benson demanded. "Washed out—merged into the holdings of one big company."

Strowli, his heavy face ashen with fright, tried to slink away. But there was no chance for that.

"Tie into him right now," some one shouted. Rough hands seized the promoter, but Benson stopped them.

"This settlement's going to be run fair from now on," he announced. "We'll let the law deal with Strowli. Whatever happens to him then, one thing's sure, he'll never show his face round the cove again."

There were shouts of assent and, seeing that the promoter was safe from bodily injury, Benson pushed his way from the cabin and hurried back along the beach to where he had last seen Derry. But when he reached the place the dog was no longer there. Benson was calling for Bo to help him find the Airedale when some one spoke his name, and, turning toward the shadows at the foot of the rock hummock, he could faintly see some one sitting there.

"He's all right now," he heard Ed say. Benson got to the rock in time to see Bo greet the dog. Ed was holding him in his arms. Derry's tail stub signaled a pleased, if weary response; then he sighed contentedly and snuggled his muzzle onto Ed's shoulder again.

"A night's sleep and he'll be fine again," Ed explained. "Smoke hit him hard. Right now he's ready to call it a day."

“Who wouldn’t be? Ten minutes more and Strowli would have got away with it. After this any old thing Derry wants in this settlement is his for the asking. Look.”

Ed could see forms moving through the dusk toward the scow. There were voices, then the excited cries of women and, as they and the children began to come ashore, a contralto voice broke into the quaint melody of some Old-World song of thankfulness. In a straggling but happy group the families of the settlers started up the dark trail toward the homes which, only an hour ago, they thought never to see again.

There were many things Benson wanted to say to his new partner but he saw that tonight Ed was in no mood for talk. The things he had to say, the questions he wanted to ask, would keep, because, for Ed Sibley and himself, there would be many other days of comradeship. Standing in the dusk, Benson smiled as he saw how understandingly Bo stood close to the weary Airedale.

It was ten minutes later before the first of the settlers approached them. Ed was listening to the water falling in a foaming column from the mouth of the flume when one of the men spoke.

“We been talking things over, Sibley,” the man began awkwardly. “We was fools—going off at half cock against you like that. I was one of the bunch that burned your cabin. I aim to square

that as best I can. Right tomorrow the gang of us'll come over to Totem Crick and put you up a new house."

"Whatever you say," Ed was beginning when Derry's head jerked up. A beetle, making a blundering night flight, had flown against his face. He glared after it.

"You better watch out," his glance said. "I'll be on my toes in an hour or two. Then I'll show you no old June bug can snap at me."

Looking down, Ed saw the zest of life come once more to the Airedale's brown eyes.

"Down—but never out. That's you, ol' Derry dog," he said huskily.

And Derry's quick upward glance said: "That's me, brother—all the time."

THE END



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